MAHOMET

THE

IMPOSTOR.

A

TRAGEDY

As it is Acted at the THEATRE-ROYAL in *Drury-Lane*, by his MAJESTY's Servants.

By Monſ. VOLTAIRE.

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PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. HAVARD.

TO point what Lengths *Credulity* has run,
What Counſels ſhaken, and what States undone;
What helliſh Fury wings th'*Enthuſiaſt*'s Rage,
And makes the troubled Earth one Tragic Stage;
What Blaſphemies *Impoſture* dares advance,
And build what Terrors on weak Ignorance;
How Fraud alone Rage to *Religion* binds,
And makes a *Pandoemonium* of our Minds;
Our *Gallic Bard*, fir'd with theſe glorous Views,
Firſt to this *Cruſade* led the Tragic Muſe;
Her Power through *France* his charming Numbers bore,
But *France* was deaf—— for all her Prieſts were ſwore,
On *Engliſh* Ground ſhe makes a firmer Stand,
And hopes to ſuffer by no hoſtile Hand.
No Clergy here uſurp the free-born Mind,
Ordain'd to teach, and not enſlave Mankind;
Religion here bids *Perſecution* ceaſe,
Without, all Order, and *within*, all Peace;
Truth guards her happy Pale with watchful Care,
And *Frauds*, tho' *Pious*, find no Entrance there.
Religion, to be Sacred, muſt be *Free*;
Men will ſuſpect——— where *Bigots* keep the Key.
Hooded and train'd like Hawks, th'*Enthuſiaſts* fly,
And the Prieſt's Victims in their Pounces die.
Like Whelps born blind, by Mother-Church they're bred,
Nor wake to *Sight*, to know themſelves miſled:

Mur-

PROLOGUE.

Murder's the Game —— and to the Sport unpreſt,
Proud of the *Sin*, and in the *Duty* bleſt,
The *Layman's* but the *Blood-hound* of the Prieſt.
Whoe'er thou art, that dar'ſt ſuch Themes advance,
To Prieſt-rid *Spain* repair, or ſlaviſh *France*;
For *Judas'* Hire there do the Devil's Task,
And trick up *Slavery* in *Religion's* Mask.
England ſtill free, no ſurer Means requires
To ſink their ſottiſh Souls, and damp their Martial Fires.
Britons, thoſe Numbers to yourſelves you owe;
Voltaire hath Strength to ſhoot in *Shakeſpear's* Bow:
Fame led him at his *Hippocrene* to drink,
And taught to write with *Nature* as to think:
With *Engliſh* Freedom, *Engliſh* Wit he knew,
And from the inexhauſted Stream profuſely drew.
Cheriſh the noble Bard yourſelves have made,
Nor let the Frauds of *France* ſteal all our Trade.
Now of each *Prize* the Winner has the wearing,
E'en ſend our *Engliſh* Stage a Privateering:
With your *Commiſſion*, we'll our Sails unfold,
And from their Loads of *Droſs*, import ſome *Gold*.

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHOMET.		Mr. *Delane.*
MIRVAN, *his General.*		Mr. *Bridges.*
ALI, HERCIDES, AMMON,	*Officers of* Mahomet.	Mr. *Green.*
ZAPHNA, PALMIRA,	*Captives brought up under* Mahomet.	Mr. *Garrick.* Mrs. *Giffard.*
ALCANOR, *Chief of the Senate of* Mecca.		Mr. *Giffard*
PHARON, *his Friend.*		Mr. *Winstone.*

SCENE, MECCA.

MAHOMET

THE

IMPOSTOR.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Temple of* MECCA.

Enter ALCANOR *and* PHARON.

ALCANOR.

—— PHARON, no more —— Shall I
Fall proſtrate to an arrogant Impoſtor,
Homage in *Mecca* one I baniſh'd thence,
And Incenſe the Deluſions of a Rebel!
No —— blaſt *Alcanor*, righteous Heav'n! if e'er
This Hand, yet free and uncontaminate,
Shall league with Fraud, or adulate a Tyrant.

PHA. Auguſt and ſacred Chief of *Iſhmael*'s Senate,
This Zeal of thine, paternal as it is,
Is fatal now —— our impotent Reſiſtance

Controuls not *Mahomet*'s unbounded Progreſs,
But, without weak'ning, irritates the Tyrant.
When once a Citizen, you well condemn'd him
As an obſcure, ſeditious Innovator:
But now he is a Conqu'ror, Prince and Pontiff;
Whilſt Nations numberleſs embrace his Laws,
And pay him Adoration —— Ev'n in *Mecca*
He boaſts his proſelytes.

ALC. Such proſelytes
Are worthy of him —— low, untutor'd Reptiles
In whom Senſe only lives —— moſt cred'lous ſtill
Of what is moſt incredible!

PHA. Be ſuch
Diſdain'd, my Lord; but mayn't the Peſt ſpread upwards,
And ſeize the Head —— Say, is the Senate ſound?
I fear ſome Members of that rev'rend Claſs
Are mark'd with the Contagion, who, from Views
Of higher pow'r and rank, or canker'd with
The gangrenous Defilement of a Bribe,
Worſhip this riſing Sun, and give a Sanction
To his Invaſions.

ALC. If, ye Powers divine!
Ye mark the Movements of this nether World,
And bring them to account, cruſh, cruſh thoſe Vipers,
Who, ſingled out by a Community
To guard their Rights, ſhall for a Graſp of Ore,
Or paltry Office, ſell 'em to the Foe.

PHA. Each honeſt Citizen, I grant, is thine,
And, grateful for thy boundleſs Bleſſings on them,
Would ſerve thee with their Lives; but the Approach
Of this Uſurper to their very Walls
Strikes 'em with ſuch a Dread, that ev'n theſe
Implore thee to accept his proffer'd Peace.

ALC.

ALC. O People, loſt to Wiſdom, as to Glory!
Go, bring in Pomp, and ſerve upon your Knees
This Idol, that will cruſh you with its Weight,
Mark, I abjure him: By his ſavage Hand
My Wife and Children periſh'd, whilſt in Vengeance
I carry'd Carnage to his very Tent,
Transfix'd to Earth his only Son, and wore
His Trappings, as a Trophy of my Conqueſt.
This Torch of Enmity thus lighted 'twixt us,
The Hands of Time itſelf can ne'er extinguiſh.

PHA. Extinguiſh not, but ſmother for a while
Its fatal Flame, and greatly ſacrifice
Thy private Suff'rings to the publick Welfare.
O ſay, *Alcanor*, wert thou to behold
(As ſoon thou may'ſt) this fam'd Metropolis
With Foes begirt, behold its pining Tenants
Prey on each other for the Means of Life,
Whilſt Lakes of Blood, and Mountains of the Slain,
(As erſt in *Jury*) putrify the Air,
And ſweep off thouſands with their pois'nous Steams,
Would thy ſlain Children be aveng'd by this?

ALC. No, *Pharon*, no; I live not for myſelf.
My Wife and Children loſt, my Country's now
My Family.

PHA. Then let not that be loſt.

ALC. 'Tis loſt by Cowardice.

PHA. By Raſhneſs, often.

ALC. *Pharon* deſiſt.

PHA. My noble Lord, I cannot,
Muſt not deſiſt, will not, ſince you're poſſeſs'd
Of Means to bring this inſolent Invader
To any Terms you'll claim.

ALC. What Means!

PHA. *Palmira.*
That blooming Fair, the Flow'r of all his Camp,
By thee born off in our laſt Skirmiſh with him,
Seems the divine Ambaſſadreſs of Peace,
Sent to procure our Safety. *Mahomet*
Has, by his Heralds, thrice propos'd her Ranſom,
And bid us fix the Price.

ALC. I know it, *Pharon.*
And would'ſt thou then reſtore this noble Treaſure
To that *Barbarian?* Would'ſt thou, for the Frauds,
The Deaths, the Devaſtations he brings on us,
Enrich his Ruffian Hands with ſuch a Gem,
And render Beauty the Reward of Rapine? ——
Smile not, my Friend, nor think that at theſe Years
Well travell'd in the Winter of my Days,
I entertain a Thought tow'rds this young Beauty,
But what's as pure as is the Weſtern Gale,
That breathes upon the uncropt Violet ———

PHA. My Lord ———

ALC. —— This Heart, by Age and Grief congeal'd,
Is no more ſenſible to Love's Endearments,
Than are our barren Rocks to Morn's ſweet Dew,
That balmy trickles down their rugged Cheeks.

PHA. My noble Chief, each Maſter-piece of Nature
Commands involuntary Homage from us.

ALC. I own a Tenderneſs, unfelt before,
A ſympathetick Grief, with ardent Wiſhes
To make her happy, fill'd my Widow'd Boſom.
I dread her being in that Monſter's Power,
And burn to have her hate him, like myſelf.
'Twas on this Hour I, at her modeſt Suit,
Promis'd her Audience in my own Pavilion.

Pha-

Pharon, go thou mean while, and ſee the Senate
Aſſembled ſtrait ——— I'll ſound 'em as I ought.
[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE *changes to a Room of State.*

Enter PALMIRA.

PAL. What means this boding Terror that uſurps,
In ſpite of me, Dominion o'er my Heart,
Converting the ſweet Flow'r of new-blown Hope
To deadly *Night-ſhade*; pois'ning to my Soul
The Fountain of its Bliſs ——— O holy Prophet!
Shall I ne'er more attend thy ſacred Leſſons?
O *Zaphna!* much-lov'd Youth! I feel for thee
As for myſelf. —— But hold, my final Audit
Is now at hand —— I tremble for th' Event!
Here comes my Judge —— Now Liberty, or Bondage!

Enter ALCANOR.

ALC. *Palmira*, whence thoſe Tears? Truſt me, Fair Maid,
Thou art not fall'n into *Barbarians* Hands;
What *Mecca* can afford of Pomp or Pleaſure,
To call Attention from Misfortune's Lap,
Demand and ſhare it.

PAL. No, my generous Victor,
My Suit's for nothing *Mecca* can afford;
Pris'ner theſe two long Months beneath your Roof,
I've taſted ſuch Benignity and Candor,
Whilſt your own Hands ſo labour'd to beguile
The anxious Moments of Captivity,
That oft' I've call'd my Tears Ingratitude.

ALC.

ALC. If ought remains, that's in my Pow'r, to ſmooth
The Rigour of your Fate, to crown your Wiſhes,
And make you ſay, *I'm happy;* why, 'twould fill
The Furrows in my Cheeks, and make old Age
Put on it's Summer's Garb.

PAL. Thus low I bleſs thee. [*Kneeling.*]
It is on you, on you alone, *Alcanor*,
My Whole of future Happineſs depends.
Reſtore me then, reſtore me to my Country,
Reſtore me to my Father, Prince, and Prophet;
Reſtore me to my —— Oh! ——

ALC. To what, *Palmira?* [*Raiſing her.*]
Thoſe meaning Bluſhes, that articulate Pauſe,
Render my Queſtion vain. This ſubtile Robber
Has trepaſs'd on thy Heart. —— Art thou not promis'd
To be enroll'd his Wife, to ſwell the Number
Of his licentious *Haram?*

PAL. No, my Lord.
Train'd up from Infancy at *Mah'met*'s Feet,
Watch'd by his Eye, and by his Precepts form'd,
I rev'rence him; nay, view him as inſpir'd
By that tremenduous Pow'r whoſe Sword he bears;
But never did this humble Breaſt conceive
A Hope ſo big with Vanity as that.

ALC. With Vanity! Now by my Sword, *Palmira*,
'Twere Vanity in him to aim ſo high.
That gen'rous Soul, ſuperior to Misfortune,
That Breaſt where every Virtue finds a Manſion,
And that fair Form where Beauty ſits enthron'd
Amidſt the Smiles and Graces, ſpeak you ſprung
From ſuch a Race, as would diſdain to match
With this fierce *Arab*.

PAL. No, the Pride of Birth

I am

I am a Stranger to ; a Captive Infant,
Nurs'd in the Camp, I ne'er could yet diſcover
Who was my Father. But our holy Prophet
Has well ſupply'd that Loſs. Have Pity then :
Pity, *Alcanor*, One who's torn from all
That's dear or venerable to her Soul ;
And O reſtore her to her Faith and Country.

ALC. Is Slav'ry dear then ? Is Fraud venerable ?
What Country ! a tumultuous wand'ring Camp !

PAL. My Country, Sir, is not a ſingle Spot
Of ſuch a Mold, or fix'd to ſuch a Clime ;
No, 'tis the ſocial Circle of my Friends,
The lov'd Community in which I'm link'd,
And in whoſe Welfare all my Wiſhes center.

ALC. Excellent Maid ! Then *Mecca* be thy Country.
Robb'd of my Children, would *Palmira* deign
To let me call her Child, the Toil I took
To make her Deſtiny propitious to her,
Would lighten the rough Burthen of my own.
But no ; you ſcorn my Country and my Laws.

PAL. Can I be yours when not my own ? Your Bounties
Demand and ſhare my Gratitude. —— But *Mahomet*
Claims Right o'er me of Parent, Prince, and Prophet.

ALC. Of Parent, Prince, and Prophet ! Heav'ns ! that Robber
Who, a 'ſcap'd Felon, emulates a Throne,
And, Scoffer at all Faiths, proclaims a new One !

PAL. O ceaſe, my Lord ; this blaſphemous Abuſe
On one, whom Millions with myſelf adore,
Does Violence to my Ear ; ſuch black Profaneneſs
'Gainſt Heav'n's Interpreter, blots out Remembrance
Of Favours paſt, and nought ſucceeds but Horror.

ALC. O Superſtition ! thy pernicious Rigours,

Inflexible to Reaſon, Truth and Nature,
Baniſh Humanity the gentleſt Breaſts.
Palmira, I lament to ſee thee plung'd
So deep in Error. ——

PAL. Do you then reject
My juſt Petition? Can *Alcanor*'s Goodneſs
Be deaf to ſuff'ring Virtue? Can his Juſtice
Be blind to injur'd Right? Name but the Ranſom,
And *Mahomet* will treble what you ask.

ALC. There is no Ranſom *Mahomet* can offer
Proportion'd to the Prize. Truſt me, *Palmira*,
I cannot yield thee up: What! to a Tyrant,
Who wrongs thy Youth, and mocks thy tender Heart
With vile Illuſions, and fanatick Terrors! ——

Enter PHARON.

What would'ſt thou, *Pharon*?

PHA. From yon Weſtern Gate,
Which opens on *Moradia*'s fertile Plains,
Mahomet's Gen'ral, *Mirvan*, haſtes to greet thee.

ALC. *Mirvan*, that vile Apoſtate!

PHA. In one Hand
He holds a Scimitar, the other bears
An Olive-Branch, which to our Chiefs he waves,
An Emblem of his Suit —— a Martial Youth,
Zaphna by Name, attends him for our Hoſtage.

PAL. [*Apart.*] *Zaphna!* Myſterious Heav'n!

PHA. *Mirvan* advances
This way, my Lord, to render you his Charge.

ALC. *Mirvan* advance! How dare the Traitor ſee me?
Palmira, thou retire. —— *Pharon*, be preſent.

[*Exit* Palmira.

Enter

Enter MIRVAN.

After six Years of infamous Rebellion
Against thy native Country, dost thou, *Mirvan*,
Again prophane, with thy detested Presence,
These sacred Walls, which once thy Hands defended,
But thy bad Heart has vilely since betray'd?
Thou poor Deserter of thy Country's Gods,
Thou base Invader of thy Country's Rights,
What would'st thou have with me?

MIR. I'd pardon thee ——
Out of Compassion to thy Age and Suff'rings,
And high Regard for thy experienc'd Valour,
Heav'n's great Apostle offers thee in Friendship
A Hand could crush thee; and I come commission'd
To name the Terms of Peace he deigns to tender.

ALC. He deigns to tender! Insolent Impostor!
Must *Mahomet* then, ye Pow'rs! give Peace to *Mecca*,
Or plunder it? —— Dost thou not, *Mirvan*, blush
To serve this Wretch —— this base of Soul, as Birth?

MIR. *Mahomet*'s Grandeur's in himself; he shines not
With borrow'd Lustre, raises not his Stature
By perching on his Father's Monument:
Born of Himself, Himself's the only Fountain
Of all the flowing Honours that adorn him.
Such is the Master I have chosen; such
Is Heav'n's Elect to rule the World in Truth.

ALC. *Mirvan*, I know thee; this insidious Blazon
Dazzles not me. Banish, for once, Imposture,
And view with Reason's Eye this homag'd Prophet,
Then Villain, or Enthusiast, thou must grant him. ——
A Pilf'ring Camel-Driver, one so vile
His own vile Crew renounc'd him —— Out-cast thus

Of Outcaſts, ſtraight, he arrogates the Prophet,
Stiles himſelf Heav'n's Apoſtle, and, by means
Of a forg'd Dream, draws o'er to his Impoſture
The Refuſe of all Nations.——Baniſh'd *Mecca*,
From Cave to Cave with *Fatima* he fled,
Whilſt ſcatter'd, perſecuted and proſcrib'd,
Through Waſtes and Deſarts his Diſciples ſtray'd.

PHA. Stray'd, till *Medina*, poiſon'd with their Errors,
Gave them a Home, and prop'd the impious Sect.

ALC. 'Twas then that thou, that thou thyſelf, more brave,
More juſt and gen'rous, didſt attack this Tyrant,
Whoſe voluntary Slave thou'rt now become.
If a true Prophet, durſt thou wound him Then?
If an Impoſtor, dar'ſt thou now obey him?

MIR. Plung'd in the Night of Prejudice, and bound
In Fetters of Hereditary Faith,
My Judgment ſlept; but when I found him born
To mold anew the proſtrate Univerſe,
I ſtarted from my Dream, join'd his Career,
And ſhar'd his arduous, and immortal Labours.
Once, I muſt own, I was as blind as thou;
Then wake to Glory, and be chang'd like me.

PHA. O what a Fall from Virtue was that Change!

ALC. What Death to Honour, wak'ning to ſuch Glory!

MIR. Embrace our Faith then, reign with *Mahomet*,
And, cloath'd in Terrors, make the Vulgar tremble.

ALC. 'Tis *Mahomet*, and Tyrants like to *Mahomet*,
'Tis *Mirvan*, and Apoſtates like to *Mirvan*,
I only would make tremble.—— Is it, ſay'ſt thou,
Religion that's the Parent of this Rapine,
This Virulence and Rage?——No, true Religion
Is always mild, propitious and humane;

Plays not the Tyrant, plants no Faith in Blood,
Nor bears Deſtruction on her Chariot Wheels,
But ſtoops to poliſh, ſuccour and redreſs,
And builds her Grandeur on the publick Good.

MIR. Thou art turn'd Chriſtian, ſure! ſome ſtraggling Monk
Has taught thee theſe tame Leſſons ——

ALC. If the Chriſtians
Hold Principles like theſe, which Reaſon dictates,
Which all our Notions of the Pow'rs divine
Declare the ſocial Laws they meant for Man,
And all the Beauties and Delights of Nature
Bear Witneſs to, the Chriſtians may be right:
Thy Sect cannot, who, nurs'd in Blood and Slaughter,
Worſhip a cruel and revengeful Being,
And draw him always with his Thunder round him,
As ripe for the Deſtruction of Mankind.

MIR. If Clemency delights thee, learn it here.
Though baniſh'd by thy Voice his native City,
Though by thy Hand robb'd of his only Son,
Mahomet pardons thee; nay farther, begs
The Hatred burning 'twixt you be extinguiſh'd
With Reconciliation's gen'rous Tear.

ALC. I know thy Maſter's Arts; his gen'rous Tears,
Like the refreſhing Drops that previous fall
To the wild Outrage of o'erwhelming Earthquakes,
Only forerun Deſtruction; his beſt Friendſhip
Is but a guileful Clue, whereby to ſeize
Your Heart's each Fort, and turn its Garriſon
Againſt itſelf. Courage he has, not Brav'ry,
For Blood and Havock are the ſure Attendants
On his victorious Car.

PHA. Leagues he will make too ——

ALC. Like other graſping Tyrants, till he eyes
A lucky Juncture to enlarge his Bounds;
Then he'll deride 'em, leap o'er ev'ry Tie
Of ſacred Guarantee, or ſworn Protection,
And, when th' oppreſſed Ally implores Aſſiſtance,
Beneath that Mask, invade the wiſh'd-for Realms,
And from pure Friendſhip take them to himſelf.

MIR. *Mahomet* fights Heav'n's Battles, bends the Bow
To ſpread Heav'n's Laws, and to ſubject to Faith
The Iron Neck of Error.

ALC. *Mirvan*, Yes,
His new Religion, molded to his Aims,
Holds out a Heav'nly Kingdom to his Followers,
Whilſt humble He courts but an Earthly One.
Luſt and Ambition, *Mirvan*, are the Springs
Of all his Actions, whilſt, without one Virtue,
Diſſimulation, like a flatt'ring Painter,
Bedecks him with the Colouring of them all.
This is thy Maſter's Portrait —— But no more ——
My Soul's inexorable, and my Hate
Immortal as the Cauſe from whence it ſprang.

MIR. What Cauſe ——

ALC. The Diff'rence between Good and Evil.

MIR. Thou talk'ſt to me, *Alcanor*, with an Air
Of a ſtern Judge, that from his dread Tribunal
Intimidates the Criminal beneath him.
Reſume thy Temper, act the Miniſter,
And treat with me as with th' Ambaſſador
Of Heav'n's Apoſtle, and *Arabia*'s King.

ALC. *Arabia*'s King! What King? Who crown'd him? ——

MIR. Conqueſt. ——
Whilſt to the Stile of Conqu'ror and of Monarch,
Patron of Peace he'd add —— Name then the Price

Of

Of Peace and of *Palmira* —— Boundleſs Treaſures,
The Spoils of vanquiſh'd Monarchs, and the Stores
Of riſl'd Provinces are thrown before thee.
Our Troops, with unwont Ardor, haſten hither
To lay in Ruin this rebellious City;
Stem then the ruſhing Torrent: *Mahomet*
In Perſon comes to claim a Conference with thee
For this good Purpoſe.

ALC Who! *Mahomet!*

MIR. Yes, he conjures thou'lt grant it.

ALC. Traitor, were I ſole Ruler here in *Mecca*,
I'd anſwer thee with Chaſtiſement ———

MIR. Hot Man!
I pity thy falſe Virtue —— But farewel ——
And ſince the Senate ſhare thy Power in *Mecca*,
To their ſerener Wiſdoms I'll appeal.

[*Exit* Mirvan.

ALC. I'll meet thee there, and ſee whoſe Voice is Victor.
Come, *Pharon*, aid me to repulſe this Traitor;
To bear him, with Impunity, amongſt us,
Is Treaſon 'gainſt ourſelves ——— Ye ſacred Powers,
My Country's Gods, that for three Thouſand Years
Have reign'd Protectors of the Tribe of *Iſhmael*;
And thou, O Sun, reſplendent Torch of Day,
The Image of thoſe Gods, who in thy March
Beam'ſt their Light on us, O ſupport my Spirit
In that firm Purpoſe it has always held,
To combat Violence, Fraud and Uſurpation,
To pluck the Spoil from the Oppreſſor's Jaws,
And keep my Country, as I found it, Free.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE, PALMIRA's *Apartment.*

PALMIRA *DISCOVERED.*

PALMIRA.

CEASE, ceaſe ye ſtreaming Inſtruments of Woe
From your ignoble Toil —— Take Warmth, my Heart;
Collect thy ſcatter'd Powers, and brave Misfortune.
In vain the Storm-toſt Mariner repines;
Were he within to raiſe as great a Tempeſt
As beats him from without, it would not ſmooth
One boiſt'rous Surge: Impatience only throws
Diſcredit on Miſchance, and adds a Shame
To our Affliction.

Enter ZAPHNA.

Hah! All gracious Heav'n!
Thou, *Zaphna!* is it thou? What pitying Angel
Guided thy Steps to theſe Abodes of Bondage?

ZAPH. Thou Sov'reign of my Soul, and all its Powers;
Object of ev'ry Fear and ev'ry Wiſh;
Friend, Siſter, Love, Companion, all that's dear!
Do I once more behold thee, my *Palmira?*
O, I will ſet it down the whiteſt Hour
That *Zaphna* e'er was bleſt with ———

PAL. Say, my Hero ———
Are my Ills ended then? They are, they are:

Now

Now *Zaphna*'s here I am no more a Captive,
Except to him; O bleſt Captivity!

ZAPH. Thoſe Smiles are dearer to my raptur'd Breaſt,
Sweeter thoſe Accents to my liſt'ning Heart,
Than all *Arabia*'s Spices to the Senſe.

PAL. No Wonder that my Soul was ſo elate,
No Wonder that the Cloud of Grief gave way,
When thou, my Sun of Comfort, wert ſo nigh.

ZAPH. Since that dire Hour, when on *Sabaria*'s Strand,
The barb'rous foe depriv'd me of *Palmira*,
In what a Gulph of Horror and Deſpair
Have thy imagin'd Perils plung'd my Soul!
Stretch'd on expiring Coarſes, for a while
To the deaf Stream I pour'd out my Complaint,
And beg'd I might be number'd with the Dead,
That ſtrow'd its Banks —— Then ſtarting from Deſpair,
With Rage I flew to *Mahomet* for Vengeance:
He, for ſome high myſterious Purpoſe, known
To Heav'n and Him alone, at length diſpatch'd
The valiant *Mirvan* to demand a Truce.
Inſtant on Wings of Lightning I purſu'd him,
No Order had —— no Leave obtain'd —— purſu'd him,
And enter'd as his Hoſtage —— fix'd, *Palmira*,
Or to redeem, or die a Captive with thee.

PAL. Heroic Youth!

ZAPH. But how have theſe *Barbarians*
Treated my Fair?

PAL. With high Humanity:
I, in my Victor, found a Friend.—— *Alcanor*
Has made me feel Captivity in Nothing,
But Abſence from my *Zaphna*, and my Friends. ——

ZAPH. I grieve a Soul ſo generous is our Foe.
But now preſented as an Hoſtage to him,

His

His noble Bearing and Humanity
Made Captive of my Heart; I felt, methought,
A new Affection lighted in my Breaſt,
And wonder'd whence the Infant Ardor ſprang.

PAL. Yet, gen'rous as he is, not all my Prayers,
Not all the Tears I laviſh at his Feet,
Can move him to reſtore me ———

ZAPH. But he ſhall ———
Let the *Barbarian* know he ſhall, *Palmira*.
The God of *Mahomet*, our Divine Protector,
Whoſe ſtill triumphant Standard I have born
O'er Piles of vanquiſh'd Infidels ——— That Power,
Which brought unnumber'd Battlements to Earth,
Will humble *Mecca* too.

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, noble *Mirvan*,
Do my *Palmira*'s Chains ſit looſe upon her?
Say, is it Freedom? This preſumptuous Senate ——

MIR. Has granted all we aſk'd, all we could wiſh.——
The Truce obtain'd, the Gates to *Mahomet*
Flew open ——

ZAPH. *Mahomet* in *Mecca!* ſay'ſt thou?
Once more in *Mecca!*

PAL. Tranſport, bid him welcome!

ZAPH. Thy Suff'rings then are o'er, the Ebb is paſt,
And a full Tide of Hope flows in upon us.

MIR. The Spirit of our Prophet, that inſpir'd me,
Breath'd ſuch divine Perſuaſion from my Lips,
As ſhook the reverend Fathers. —— Sirs, cried I,
This Fav'rite of high Heav'n, who rules in Battle,
Before whoſe Footſtool tributary Kings
Bow the anointed Head, born here in *Mecca*,

Asks but to be enroll'd a Senator,
And you refuſe his Pray'r. Deluded Sages!
Although your Conqueror, he requeſts no more
Than one Day's Truce, pure Pity to yourſelves!
To ſave you, if he can, and you —— O Shame! ——
At this a gen'ral Murmur ſpread around,
Which ſeem'd propitious to us ——

ZAPH. Greatly carried!
Go on ——

MIR. Then ſtraight th' inflexible *Alcanor*
Flew through the Streets, aſſembling all the People,
To bar our Prophet. Thither too I fled,
Urg'd the ſame Arguments, exhorted, threatned,
'Till they unhing'd the Gates, and gave free Paſſage
To *Mahomet* and his Chiefs —— In vain *Alcanor*,
And his diſhearten'd Party, ſtrove t' oppoſe him;
Serene and dauntleſs through the gazing Croud,
With more than human Majeſty he mov'd,
Bearing the peaceful Olive, whilſt the Truce
Was inſtantly Proclaim'd ——

PAL. But where's the Prophet?

MIR. Reclin'd in yonder Grott that joins the Temple,
Attended by his Chiefs.

ZAPH. There let us haſte
With duteous Step, and bow ourſelves before him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to a ſpacious Grotto.*

MAHOMET *with the* ALCORAN *before him.*

HERCIDES, AMMON, ALI, *&c. attending at a Diſtance.*

MAH. Glorious Hypocriſy! What Fools are they,
Who, fraught with luſtful or ambitious Views,
Wear not thy ſpecious Maſk —— Thou, *Alcoran!*
Haſt won more Battles, ta'en more Cities for me
Than thrice my feeble Numbers had atchiev'd,
Without the Succour of thy ſacred Impulſe.
[*Coming forward.*]
Invincible Supporters of our Grandeur!
My faithful Chiefs, *Hercides*, *Ammon*, *Ali!*
Go and inſtruct this People in my Name;
That Faith may Dawn, and, like a Morning-Star,
Be Herald to My Riſing.
Lead them to know, and to adore My God;
But above all to Fear him —— Lo *Palmira!*
Exeunt Hercides, *&c.*
Her Angel-Face, with unfeign'd Bluſhes ſpread,
Proclaims the Purity that dwells within.

Enter MIRVAN, ZAPHNA *and* PALMIRA.

[*To* Palmira.] The Hand of War was ne'er before ſo barbarous,
Never bore from me half ſo rich a Spoil

As thee, my Fair.

PAL. Joy to my Heav'nly Guardian!
Joy to the World that *Mahomet*'s in *Mecca!*

MAH. My Child, let me embrace thee —— How's this, *Zaphna!*
Thou here! ——

ZAPH. [*Kneeling*] My Father, Chief, and holy Pontiff!
The God that thou'rt inſpir'd by, march'd before me.
Ready, for thee, to wade through Seas of Danger,
Or cope with Death itſelf, I hither haſten'd
To yield myſelf an Hoſtage, and with Zeal
Prevent thy Order.

MAH. 'Twas not well, raſh Boy:
He that does more than I command him, errs
As much as he who faulters in his Duty,
And is not for my Purpoſe —— I obey
My God ——— implicitly obey thou Me.

PAL. Pardon, my gracious Lord, his well-meant Ardor.
Brought up from tender Infancy beneath
The Shelter of thy ſacred Patronage,
Zaphna and I've been animated ſtill
By the ſame Sentiments: Alas, great Prophet,
I've had enough of Wretchedneſs, —— To languiſh
A Priſoner here, far both from him and you:
Grudge me not then the Ray of Conſolation
His Preſence beam'd, nor cloud my dawning Hope
Of riſing Freedom and Felicity.

MAH. *Palmira*, 'tis enough, I read thy Heart ——
Be not alarm'd; tho' burden'd with the Cares
Of Thrones and Altars, ſtill my Guardian Eye
Will watch o'er thee, as o'er the Univerſe.
Follow my Generals, *Zaphna*: Fair *Palmira*,

Retire,

Retire, and pay your powerful Vows to Heav'n,
And dread no Wrongs but from *Alcanor*.

[Zaphna *and* Palmira *go out ſeparately*.

Mirvan ——
Attend thou here —— 'Tis Time, my truſty Soldier,
My long try'd Friend, to lay unfolded to thee
The cloſe Reſolves and Councils of my Heart.
The tedious Length of a precarious Siege
May damp the preſent Ardor of my Troops,
And check me in the Height of my Career.
Let us not give deluded Mortals Leiſure,
By Reaſon, to diſperſe the myſtick Gloom
We've caſt about us. —— Prepoſſeſſion, Friend,
Reigns Monarch of the Million —— *Mecca*'s Crowd
Gaze at my rapid Victories, and think
Some awful Power directs my Arm to Conqueſt.
But whilſt our Friends once more renew their Efforts,
To win the wav'ring People to our Intereſt,
What think'ſt thou, ſay, of *Zaphna* and *Palmira*?

MIR. As of thy moſt reſign'd and faithful Vaſſals.

MAH. O! *Mirvan*, they're the deadlieſt of my Foes.

MIR. How!

MAH. Yes, they love each other ——

MIR. Well —— What Crime ——

MAH. What Crime, doſt ſay? —— Learn all my Frailty, then ——
My Life's a Combat, keen Auſterity
Subjects my Nature to abſtemious Bearings.
I've baniſh'd from my Lips that trait'rous Liquor,
That either works to Practices of Outrage,
Or melts the Manly Breaſt to Woman Weakneſs;
Or on the burning Sands, or deſert Rocks,
With thee I bear th' Inclemency of Climates,

Freeze

Freeze at the Pole, or ſcorch beneath the Line.
For all theſe Toils Love only can retaliate,
The only Conſolation or Reward!
Fruit of my Labours, Idol of my Incenſe,
And ſole Divinity that I adore.
Know then, that I prefer this young *Palmira*
To all the ripen'd Beauties that attend me;
Dwell on her Accents, doat upon her Smiles,
And am not Mine but Her's: Now judge, my Friend,
How vaſt the jealous Tranſports of thy Maſter,
When at his Feet he daily hears this Charmer
Avow a foreign Love, and, inſolent!
Give *Mahomet* a Rival?

MIR. How! and *Mahomet*
Not inſtantly revenge! ——

MAH. Ay, ſhould he not?
But better to deteſt him, know him better:
Learn then, that both my Rival, and my Love,
Sprang from the Loins of this audacious Tyrant.

MIR. *Alcanor!* ——

MAH. Is their Father; old *Hercides*,
To whoſe ſage Inſtitution I commit
My Captive Infants, late reveal'd it to me ——
Perdition! I myſelf light up their Flame,
And fed it till I ſet myſelf on Fire.
Well, Means muſt be employ'd; but ſee, the Father:
He comes this Way, and launches from his Eye
Malignant Sparks of Enmity and Rage.
Mirvan, ſee all ta'en Care of; let *Hercides*,
With his Eſcorte, beſet yon Gate; bid *Ali*
Make proper Diſpoſition round the Temple;
This done, return, and render me Account
Of what Succeſs we meet with 'mongſt the People:

Then,

Then, *Mirvan*, we'll determine or to looſe,
Or bridle in our Vengeance, as it ſuits.

[*Exit* Mirvan.

Enter ALCANOR.

MAH. Why doſt thou ſtart, *Alcanor?* Whence that Horror?
Is then my Sight ſo baneful to thee?

ALC. Heav'ns!
Muſt I then bear this? Muſt I meet in *Mecca*,
On Terms of Peace, this Spoiler of the Earth?

MAH. Approach, old Man, without a Bluſh, ſince Heav'n
For ſome high End, decrees our future Union.

ALC. I bluſh not for myſelf, but thee, thou Tyrant;
For thee, bad Man! who com'ſt with Serpent-guile
To ſow Diſſention in the Realms of Peace;
Thy very Name ſets Families at Variance,
'Twixt Son and Father, burſts the Bonds of Nature,
And ſcares Endearment from the Nuptial Pillow;
Ev'n Truce, with thee is a new Stratagem
For Leave to plunge the Dagger in our Hearts.
And is it, inſolent Diſſembler! thus
Thou com'ſt to give the Sons of *Mecca* Peace,
And me an unknown God? ——

MAH. Were I to anſwer any but *Alcanor*,
That unknown God ſhould ſpeak in Thunder for me:
But here with thee I'd parley as a Man.

ALC. What can'ſt thou ſay? What urge in thy Defence?
That like a hunger-ſtung and rav'nous Wolf
Prowling for Prey, thou traverſeſt the World,
Seizing on all that comes within thy Graſp.

MAH. Each Nation of the Peopled Globe by Turns

Have

Have ſoar'd to Triumph, and immortal Fame;
At length *Arabia*'s happy Hour is come.
Her gen'rous Sons too long, alas! unknown,
Have ſuffer'd all their Glory to lie buried:
New Days, by Vict'ry mark'd, at length proceed,
And *Mecca*'s now the deſtin'd Seat of Power.

ALC. Power is a Curſe when in a Tyrant's Hands,
But in a *Bigot* Tyrant's —— treble Curſe.

MAH. Behold from North to South the ravag'd Globe
Lies deſolate, a waſte of crumbled Empires.
Perſia ſtill bleeding, and her Throne revers'd,
India yok'd to Slav'ry, *Egypt* ſpoil'd,
And *Conſtantine*'s late Grandeur now no more.
Behold the well-built *Roman* Empire mould'ring
On ev'ry Side; whilſt, ruining beneath
Its own enormous Weight, its ſcatter'd Members,
Like Branches from the Parent-Tree lopt off,
Lie dead and wither'd —— On this Wreck of Nations
Let lov'd *Arabia* riſe: A new Religion,
New Laws, new Ties, and a new God are wanting,
To rouſe the ſlumb'ring World to Deeds of Glory.

ALC. To Deeds of Rapine, Bloodſhed, and Impoſture!

MAH. *Minos* in *Crete*; in *Aſia*, *Zoroaſter*;
At *Egypt* fam'd *Oſiris*; and in *Latium*
The pious *Numa*, gave thoſe barb'rous People
Their ineffective Laws; I'm therefore come,
After a thouſand annual Suns, to baniſh
Their crude Impoſtures, and unite all Nations
Under one Faith and Sovereign ——

ALC. At thy Nod, then,
The Face of the Creation muſt be chang'd.
By Menaces and Carnage, modeſt Thou!
Would'ſt force all Mortals to believe alike:

What

What Right haſt thou receiv'd to plant new Faiths,
Or lay a Claim to Royalty and Prieſthood?

MAH. The Right that a reſolv'd and tow'ring Spirit
Has o'er the grov'ling Inſtinct of the Vulgar ——

ALC. Patience good Heav'ns! Have I not known thee, *Mahomet*,
When void of Wealth, Inheritance, or Fame,
Rank'd with the loweſt of the Low at *Mecca*?

MAH. Doſt thou not know, ſuperb, yet feeble Man!
That the low Inſect lurking in the Graſs,
And the Imperial Eagle which aloft
Ploughs the etherial Plain, are both alike
In the eternal Eye —— Mortals are equal.
It is not Birth, Magnificence, or Pow'r,
But Virtue only makes the Diff'rence 'twixt them.

ALC. [*Apart.*] What ſacred Truth, from what polluted Lips!

MAH. By Virtue's ardent Pinions bore on high,
Heav'n met my Zeal, gave me in ſolemn Charge
Its ſacred Laws, then bade me On and Publiſh.

ALC. And did Heav'n bid thee On and Plunder too?

MAH. My Law is active, and inflames the Soul
With Thirſt of Glory: What can thy dumb Gods?
What Laurels ſpring beneath their ſooty Altars?
Thy ſlothful Sect diſgrace the Human-kind,
Enervate lifeleſs Images of Men!
Mine bear th' intrepid Soul; my Faith makes Heroes.

ALC. Go preach theſe Doctrines at *Medina*, where,
By proſtrate Wretches thou art rais'd to Homage.

MAH. Hear me, thy *Mecca* trembles at my Name:
If therefore thou would'ſt ſave thyſelf or City,
Embrace my proffer'd Friendſhip —— What, To-day,
I thus Solicit, I'll Command To-morrow.

ALC.

ALC. Contract with thee a Friendſhip! frontleſs Man!
Know'ſt thou a God can work that Miracle?
MAH. I do ——— Neceſſity. Thy Intereſt.
ALC. Intereſt is thy God, Equity is mine.
Propoſe the Tie of this unnatural Union;
Say, is't the Loſs of thy ill-fated Son,
Who in the Field fell Victim to my Rage,
Or the dear Blood of my poor Captive Children,
Shed by thy butchering Hands?
MAH. Ay, 'tis thy Children.
Mark me then well, and learn th' important Secret
Which I'm ſole Maſter of ——— Thy Children live.
ALC. Live!
MAH. Yes ——— both live ———
ALC. What ſay'ſt thou? both?
MAH. Ay, both.
ALC. And doſt thou not beguile me?
MAH. No, old Man.
ALC. Propitious Heav'ns! ſay, *Mahomet*, for now,
Methinks I could hold endleſs Converſe with thee,
Say, what's their Portion! Liberty, or Bondage? ——
MAH. Bred in my Camp, and tutor'd in my Law,
They wait upon my Will.
ALC. And haſt thou ne'er
Let looſe thy Vengeance on them? Never wrung 'em
With Shackles, Rack, or Scourge? Ne'er thought of me,
And then ——
MAH. No, I diſdain'd to puniſh them
For Injuries done by thee —— Hear then, *Alcanor*;
I hold the Balance of their Deſtinies,
And now it's on the Turn——their Lives, or Deaths——
'Tis thine to ſay which ſhall preponderate.

ALC. Mine! Can I ſave them? Name the mighty Ranſom ——
If I muſt bear their Chains, double the Weight,
And I will kiſs the Hand that puts them on:
Or if my ſtreaming Blood muſt be the Purchaſe,
Drain ev'ry Sluice and Channel of my Body,
My ſwelling Veins will burſt to give it Paſſage.

MAH. I'll tell thee then —Renounce thy Pagan Faith;
Aboliſh thy vain Gods, and ——

ALC. Hah!

MAH. Nay more,
Surrender *Mecca* to me, quit this Temple,
Aſſiſt me to impoſe upon the World,
Thunder my *Koran* to the gazing Crowd,
Proclaim me for their Prophet, and their King,
And be a glorious Pattern of Credulity
To *Korah*'s ſtubborn Tribe. Theſe Terms perform'd,
Thy Son ſhall be reſtor'd, and *Mah'met*'s ſelf
Will deign to wed thy Daughter.

ALC. Hear me, *Mahomet*,
I am a Father, and this Boſom boaſts
A Heart as tender as e'er Parent bore.
After a fifteen Years of Anguiſh for them,
Once more to view my Children, claſp 'em to me,
And die in their Embraces! melting Thought!
But were I doom'd, or to enſlave my Country,
And help to ſpread black Error o'er the Earth;
Or to behold thoſe Blood-embrued Hands,
Deprive me of 'em both —— Know me then, *Mahomet*,
I'd not admit a Doubt to cloud my Choice ——

[*Looking earneſtly at* Mahomet *for ſome Time before he ſpeaks.*

Farewel. [*Exit* Alcanor.

MAH.

MAH. Why, fare thee well then —— Churliſh Dotard!
Inexorable Fool! Now, by my Arms,
I will have great Revenge; I'll meet thy Scorn
With treble Retribution.

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, my *Mirvan*,
What ſay'ſt thou to it now?

MIR. Why, that *Alcanor*,
Or We muſt fall.

MAH. Fall then th' obdurate Rebel!

MIR. The Truce expires To-morrow, when *Alcanor*
Again is *Mecca*'s Maſter, and has vow'd
Deſtruction on thy Head; The Senate too
Have paſs'd thy Doom.

MAH. Thoſe Heart-chill'd, paltry Bablers,
Plac'd on the Bench of Sloth, with Eaſe can Nod,
And Vote a Man to Death; why don't the Cowards
Stand me in yonder Plain? ——With half their Numbers
I drove 'em headlong to their Walls for Shelter;
And he was deem'd the wiſeſt Senator,
That enter'd firſt the Gate; but now they think
They've got me in the Toil, their Spirits mount,
And they could prove moſt valorous Aſſaſſins. ——
Well, this I like —— I always ow'd my Greatneſs
To Oppoſition; had I not met Struggle
I'd been Obſcure —— enough —— periſh *Alcanor!*
He marbl'd up, the pliant Populace,
Thoſe Dupes of Novelty, will bend before us
Like Oſiers to a Hurricane. ——

MIR. No Time
Is to be loſt;

MAH. But for a proper Arm?

For,

For, howſoever irkſome, we muſt ſave
Appearances, and mask it with the Vulgar.

MIR. True, my ſage Chief.——What think'ſt thou then of *Zaphna?*

MAH. Of *Zaphna*, ſay'ſt thou!

MIR. Yes, *Alcanor*'s Hoſtage ——
He can in private do thee Vengeance on him.
Thy other Fav'rites of maturer Age,
And more diſcreetly zealous, would not riſk it:
Youth is the Stock, whence grafted Superſtition
Shoots with unbounded Vigour. He's a Slave
To thy deſpotick Faith, and urg'd by thee,
However mild his Nature may appear,
Howe'er humane and noble is his Spirit,
Or ſtrong his Reaſon, where allow'd to reaſon,
He would, for Heav'n's ſake, martyr half Mankind.

MAH. The Brother of *Palmira!*

MIR. Yes, that Brother,
The only Son of thy outragious Foe,
And the inceſtuous Rival of thy Love.

MAH. I hate the Stripling, loath his very Name:
The *Manes* of my Son too cries for Vengeance
On the curſt Sire; but then, thou know'ſt my Love,
Know'ſt from whoſe Blood ſhe ſprang; this ſtaggers, *Mirvan.*
And yet I'm here ſurrounded with a Gulph
Ready to ſwallow me; come too, in queſt
Of Altars and a Throne—— What muſt be done? ——
My warring Paſſions, like contending Clouds,
When fraught with Thunder's fatal Fuel, burſt
Upon themſelves, and rend me with the Shock.
And ſhall enervating, contagious Love,
Hag my aſpiring Spirit, ſink me down

To Woman's Shackles, make a Lap-thing of me?
Glory: that muſt not be! Ambition ſtill,
And great Revenge, impetuous urge their Claims,
And muſt be notic'd. *Mirvan*, ſound this Youth:
Touch not at once upon the ſtartling Purpoſe,
But make due Preparation.

MIR. I'll attack him
With all the Forces of Enthuſiaſm:
There lies our Strength.

MAH. Firſt then, a ſolemn Vow
To act whatever Heav'n by me enjoins him.
Next, Omens, Dreams, and Viſions may be pleaded:
Hints too of black Deſigns by this *Alcanor*
Upon *Palmira*'s Virtue, and his Life.——
But to the Proof——Be now propitious, Fortune,
Then Love, Ambition, Vengeance, jointly triumph.

End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

ZAPHNA and PALMIRA.

ZAPHNA.

ALCANOR claim a private Conference with us!
What has he to unfold?

PAL. I tremble, *Zaphna*.

ZAPH. Time preſs'd too, did he ſay?

PAL. He did; then caſt
A Look ſo piercing on me, it o'erwhelm'd
My Face with deep Confuſion; this he mark'd,
Then, ſtarting, left me.

ZAPH. [*Aſide.*] Hah! This gives me Fear
That *Mirvan*'s Jealouſies are too well grounded;
But I muſt not diſtract her tender Boſom
With viſionary Terrors. [*To* Pal.] Both in private?

PAL. In private both.

ZAPH. Her Virtue, and my Life! [*Apart.*]
It cannot be; ſo reverend a Form
Could ne'er be Pander to ſuch black Devices.

PAL. But let us ſhun it, *Zaphna*; much I fear
Alcanor has deceiv'd us; dread the Treach'ry
Of this blood-thirſty Senate. Truſt me, *Zaphna*,
They've ſworn the Extirpation of our Faith,
Nor care by what vile Means ———

ZAPH. My Soul's beſt Treaſure,
For whoſe Security my ev'ry Thought
Is up in Arms, regardleſs of my own;
Shun thou *Alcanor*'s Preſence. I would meet him

Intrepid

Intrepid inſtantly, but Duty calls
To more important Deeds. This Hour, *Palmira*,
Mirvan, by Order of our royal Pontiff,
Prepares to ſolemnize ſome Act of Worſhip
Of a more hallow'd and myſterious kind,
Than will admit of vulgar Eye. Myſelf
Alone am honour'd to aſſiſt.

PAL. Alone!

ZAPH. Yes, to devote myſelf by ſolemn Vow
For ſome great Act, of which my Fair's the Prize.

PAL. What Act?

ZAPH. No matter, ſince my lov'd *Palmira*
Shall be the glorious Recompence.———

PAL. Oh *Zaphna!*
Methinks I do not like this ſecret Vow!
Why muſt not I be preſent? Were I with thee
I ſhould not be ſo anxious; I'd then guard thee
'Gainſt ought that offer'd in the Shape of Danger.
For, truſt me, *Zaphna*, my Affection for thee
Is of that pure, diſintereſted Nature,
So free from Paſſion's Taint, I've no one Wiſh
To have thee more than thus; have thee my Friend,
Share thy lov'd Converſe, wait upon thy Welfare,
And view thee with a Siſter's ſpotleſs Eye.

ZAPH. Angelick Excellence!

PAL. And, let me tell thee,
This *Mirvan*, this fierce *Mirvan* gives me Terrors;
So far from tend'ring Conſolation to me,
His Theme is Blood and Slaughter; as I met him,
His Eyes flam'd Fury, whilſt in dubious Phraſe
He thus beſpoke me——— "The deſtroying Angel
"Muſt be let looſe.——— *Palmira*, Heaven ordains
"Some glorious Deed for thee, yet hid in Darkneſs;

"Learn

" Learn an implicit Rev'rence for its Will,
" And above all, I warn thee, fear for *Zaphna*."

ZAPH. What could he mean? Can I believe, *Alcanor*,
Thy fair Deportment but a treach'rous Mask?
Perhaps in thoſe bleſs'd Moments, when once more
I felt the Sunſhine of *Palmira*'s Smiles,
My Soul, wrapt up in its own Tranſport, full,
Too full to let in any Stranger-Thought,
Forgetting all its Griefs, and all its Fears,
O'erlook'd the artful Windings of his Heart;
For, ſince, I've held me happy in his Friendſhip,
And Bondage wore the Livery of Choice.
But this was wrong, and henceforth I will hate him
With double Zeal for thus ſeducing me.
Yet, ſpite of all the Rage that ought to fire me
Againſt this Rebel to our Faith and Prophet,
'Tis hard to hate, where one's inclin'd to love.

PAL. How has Heav'n fraught our love-link'd Hearts, my *Zaphna*,
With the ſame Thoughts, Averſions, and Deſires!
But for thy Safety, and our dread Religion
That thunders Hatred to all Infidels,
With great Remorſe I ſhould accuſe *Alcanor*.

ZAPH. Let us ſhake off this vain Remorſe, *Palmira*,
Reſign ourſelves to Heav'n, and act its Pleaſure.
The Hour is come that I muſt pledge my Vow.
Doubt not but the ſupreme, who claims this Service,
Will prove propitious to our chaſte Endearments.
Farewel, my Love; I fly to gain the Summit
Of Earth's Felicity —— to gain *Palmira*. [*Exit*.

PAL. Where'er I turn me here, 'tis all Suſpicion!
What means this Vow! *Mirvan*, I like thee not.
Alcanor too diſtracts my tim'rous Breaſt!

Ev'n

Ev'n *Mah'met*'s Self I dread whilſt I invoke him!
Like one benighted 'midſt a Place of Tombs,
I gaze around me, ſtart at ev'ry Motion,
And ſeem hem'd in by viſionary Spectres.
All righteous Power, whom trembling I adore,
And blindly follow! O deliver me
From theſe Heart-rending Terrors. —— Ha! who's here?

Enter MAHOMET.

'Tis he! 'tis *Mahomet* himſelf; kind Heav'n
Has ſent him to my Aid —— My gracious Lord,
Protect the dear, dear Idol of my Soul;
Save *Zaphna*, guard him from ——

MAH. From what? —— Why *Zaphna?*
Whence this vain Terror? Is he not with us?

PAL. O Sir, you double now my Apprehenſions.
Thoſe broken Accents, and that eager Look,
Shew you have Anguiſh ſmothering at the Heart,
And prove, for once, that *Mahomet*'s a Mortal.

MAH. [*Apart.*] Hah! I ſhall turn a Traitor to myſelf—
O Woman! Woman! —— Hear me; ought I not
To be enrag'd at thy profane Attachment?
How could thy Breaſt, without the keeneſt Sting,
Harbour one Thought not dictated by me?
Is that young Mind, I took ſuch Toil to form,
Turn'd an Ingrate and Infidel at once?
Away, rebellious Maid ——

PAL. What doſt thou ſay,
My Royal Lord? Thus proſtrate at your Feet,
Let me implore Forgiveneſs, if in ought
I have offended; talk not to me thus;
A Frown from thee, my Father and my King,
Is Death to poor *Palmira*. Say then, *Mahomet*,
Didſt thou not deign to juſtify his Choice?

Didſt thou not in this very Place permit him
To tender me his Vows?

MAH. [*Apart.*] His Vows! Perdition!
How the ſoft Trait'reſs racks me!—Riſe, *Palmira.*—
[*Apart.*] Down, Rebel Love! I muſt be calm.——
Come hither;
Beware, raſh Maid, of ſuch imprudent Steps,
They lead to Guilt. What wild, pernicious Errors
Mayn't the Heart yield to, if not greatly watch'd!

PAL. In loving *Zaphna*, ſure it cannot err;
There's nothing wild, nothing pernicious——

MAH. How!
This Theme delights you——

PAL. I muſt own it does.
Yes, my great Maſter; for I ſtill have thought
That Heav'n itſelf approv'd of my Affection,
And gave a Sanction to our mutual Ardours.
From Heav'n, you oft' have told us, ev'ry Bent
And proper Tendency of Nature Springs.
Heav'n knows not Change; how can it then To-day
Condemn a Paſſion Yeſter's Sun approv'd?
Can what was Virtue once be now a Crime?
Can I be guilty——

MAH. Yes—— toward me you are——
You! nurs'd from Infancy beneath my Eye,
Child of my Care, and Pupil of my Faith!
You, whom my partial Fondneſs ſtill diſtinguiſh'd
From all the captive Youth that grac'd my Triumphs;
And You, who now, without my Leave, permit
A Slave to bear thee from my Sight for ever.

PAL. No, we both live, nay more, would die for Thee:
And, O my Lord, if all that Earth can offer
Of Grandeur, Opulence, or Pleaſure, e'er

Shall make me deaf to Gratitude's Demands,
May *Zaphna*'s Self be Evidence againſt me,
And plead for double Vengeance on my Treach'ry.

MAH. [*Apart.*] *Zaphna* again! Furies, I ſhall relapſe!
And make her Witneſs of my Weakneſs.

PAL. Sir!
What ſudden Start of Paſſion arms that Eye?

MAH. O, nothing; pray retire a while; take Courage,
I'm not at all diſpleas'd; 'twas but to ſound
The Depth of thy young Heart. I praiſe thy Choice.
Truſt then thy deareſt Int'reſt to my Boſom:
But know, your Fate depends on your Obedience.
If I have been a Guardian to your Youth,
If all my laviſh Bounties paſt weigh aught,
Deſerve the future Bleſſings which await you.
Howe'er the Voice of Heav'n diſpoſe of *Zaphna*,
Confirm him in the Path where Duty leads,
That he may keep his Vow, and merit thee.

PAL. Diſtruſt him not, my Sov'reign, noble *Zaphna*
Diſdains to lag in Love or Glory's Courſe.

MAH. Enough of Words ——

PAL. As, boldly, I've avow'd
The Love I bear that Hero at your Feet,
I'll now to him, and fire his gen'rous Breaſt,
To prove the Duty he has ſworn to thee. [*Exit* Palmira.

MAHOMET *alone.*

MAH. Confuſion! muſt I, ſpite o' me, be made
The Confident of her inceſtuous Paſſion?
What could I ſay? Such ſweet Simplicity
Lur'd down my Rage, and innocently wing'd
The Arrow through my Heart. And ſhall I bear this?
Be made the Sport of curſt *Alcanor*'s Houſe;

Check'd

Check'd in my rapid Progreſs by the Sire,
Supplanted in my Love by his raſh Boy,
And made a gentle Pander to the Daughter?
Perdition on the whole deteſted Race!

Enter MIRVAN.

MIR. Now, *Mahomet*'s the Time to ſeize on *Mecca*,
Cruſh this *Alcanor*, and enjoy *Palmira*.
This Night the old Enthuſiaſt offers Incenſe
To his vain Gods in ſacred *Caaba*.
Zaphna, who flames with Zeal for Heav'n and Thee,
May be won o'er to ſeize that lucky Moment.

MAH. He ſhall; it muſt be ſo; he's born to act
The glorious Crime; and let him be, at once,
The Inſtrument and Victim of the Murder.
My Law, my Love, my Vengeance, my own Safety,
Have doom'd it ſo.——But, *Mirvan*, doſt thou think
His youthful Courage, nurs'd in Superſtition,
Can e'er be work'd ——

MIR. I tell thee, *Mahomet*,
He's tutor'd to accompliſh thy Deſign.
Palmira too, who thinks thy Will is Heav'n's,
Will nerve his Arm to execute thy Pleaſure.
Love and Enthuſiaſm blind her Youth:
They're ſtill moſt zealous who're moſt ignorant.

MAH. Didſt thou engage him by a ſolemn Vow?

MIR. I did, with all th' Enthuſiaſtick Pomp
Thy Law enjoins; then, gave him, as from thee,
A conſecrated Sword to act thy Will.
O, he is burning with religious Fury!
But hold, he comes ——

Enter ZAPHNA.

MAH. Child of that awful and tremendous Pow'r,
Whoſe Laws I publiſh, whoſe Beheſts proclaim,

Liſten

Liſten, whilſt I unfold his ſacred Will.
'Tis thine to vindicate his Ways to Man,
'Tis thine his injur'd Worſhip to avenge.

ZAPH. Thou Lord of Nations, Delegate of Heav'n,
Sent to ſhed Day o'er the benighted World,
O ſay, in what can *Zaphna* prove his Duty?
Inſtruct me how a frail earth-priſon'd Mortal
Can or avenge or vindicate a God.

MAH. By thy weak Arm he deigns to prove his Cauſe:
And launch his Vengeance on blaſpheming Rebels.

ZAPH. What glorious Action, what illuſtrious Danger
Does that Supreme, whoſe Image thou, demand?
Place me, O place me in the Front of Battle,
'Gainſt Odds innumerable; try me there.
Or, if a ſingle Combat claim my Might,
The ſtouteſt *Arab* may ſtep forth, and ſee
If *Zaphna* fail to greet him as he ought.

MAH. O greatly ſaid, my Son; 'tis Inſpiration!
But heed me; 'tis not by a glaring Act
Of human Valour, Heav'n has will'd to prove thee;
This Infidels themſelves may boaſt, when led
By Oſtentation, Rage, or Brute-like Raſhneſs.
To do whate'er Heav'n gives in ſacred Charge,
Nor dare to ſound its fathomleſs Decrees,
This, and This only's meritorious Zeal.
Attend, adore, obey; thou ſhall't be arm'd
By Death's remorſeleſs Angel, which awaits me.

ZAPH. Speak out, pronounce: What Victim muſt I offer?
What Tyrant, Sacrifice? Whoſe Blood requir'ſt thou?

MAH. The Blood of a deteſted Infidel,
A Murderer, a Foe to Heav'n and Me.
A Wretch who ſlew my Child, blaſphemes my God,
And like a huge *Coloſſus* bears a World

Of

Of impious Oppoſition to my Faith;
The Blood of curſt *Alcanor*.

ZAPH. I! —— *Alcanor!*

MAH. What! doſt thou heſitate? raſh Youth, beware;
He that deliberates is ſacrilegious.
Far, far from me be thoſe audacious Mortals,
Who for themſelves would impiouſly judge,
Or ſee with their own Eyes; who dares to think,
Was never born a Proſelyte for me.
Know who I am: Know, on this very Spot,
I've charg'd thee with the juſt Decree of Heav'n.
And when that Heav'n requires of thee no more
Than the bare Off'ring of its deadlieſt Foe,
Nay, thy Foe too, and mine, why thou doſt balance,
As thy own Father were the Victim claim'd!
Go, vile Idolater, falſe *Muſſulman*,
Go ſeek another Maſter; a new Faith.

ZAPH. O *Mahomet* ——

MAH. Juſt when the Prize is ready,
When fair *Palmira*'s deſtin'd to thy Arms ——
But what's *Palmira?* or what's Heaven to thee,
Thou poor, weak Rebel to thy Faith and Love?
Go, ſerve and cringe to our deteſted Foe.

ZAPH. O pardon, *Mahomet*; methinks I hear
The Oracle of Heav'n — — it ſhall be done.

MAH. Obey then, ſtrike, and for his impious Blood,
Palmira's Charms and Paradiſe be thine.
[*Apart* to *Mirvan*.] *Mirvan*, attend him cloſe, and let thy Eyes
Be fix'd on ev'ry Movement of his Soul. [*Exeunt.*

ZAPHNA *alone*.

ZAPH. Soft, let me think —— this Duty wears the Face

Of

Of ſomething more than monſtrous —— pardon Heav'n!
To ſacrifice an innocent old Man,
Weigh'd down with Age, unſuccour'd, and unarm'd!
When I am Hoſtage for his Safety too ——
No matter, Heav'n has choſe me for the Duty,
My Vow is paſs'd, and muſt be ſtraight fulfill'd.
Ye ſtern, relentleſs Miniſters of Wrath,
Spirits of Vengeance, by whoſe ruthleſs Hands
The haughty Tyrants of the Earth have bled,
Come to my Succour; to my flaming Zeal
Join your determin'd Courage; from this Breaſt
Baniſh the Stripling Pity. And thou, Angel
Of *Mahomet*, exterminating Angel,
That mow'ſt down Nations to prepare his Paſſage,
Give me the Scorpion's Rage, the Baſiliſk's Eye,
That I may look, and look till I can murder.
Hah! who comes here?

Enter ALCANOR.

ALC. Whence, *Zaphna*, that deep Gloom,
That like a blaſting Mildew on the Ear
Of promis'd Harveſt, blackens o'er thy Viſage?
Grieve not that here, thro' Form, thou art confin'd:
I hold thee not as Hoſtage, but as Friend,
And make thy Safety Partner with my own.

ZAPH. [*Apart.*] And make my Safety Partner with thy own!

ALC. The bloody Carnage, by this Truce ſuſpended
For a few Moments, like a Torrent check'd
In its full Flow, will with redoubled Strength
Bear all before it. —— I muſt ſay no more;
But, *Zaphna*, truſt me this, my Heart is touch'd
To think that thou'rt in *Mecca*, 'midſt thy Foes,
Sworn Foes to *Mahomet*, and all his Friends.

For when Confuſion reigns, and Inſurrection
With indiſcriminating Fury ſtalks
Through ev'ry Street, what Mercy can be hop'd?
In this impending Scene of publick Horror,
Be then, dear Youth, theſe Manſions thy Aſylum.
I'll be thy Hoſtage now, and with my Life
Will anſwer that no Miſchief ſhall befal thee.
I know not why, but thou art precious to me.

ZAPH. Heav'n, Duty, Gratitude, Humanity! [*Apart.*
What did'ſt thou ſay, *Alcanor?* Did'ſt thou ſay,
That thy own Roof ſhould ſhield me from the Tempeſt?
That thy own Life ſtood Hoſtage for my Safety?

ALC. Why thus amaz'd at my Compaſſion for thee?
I am a Man myſelf, and that's enough
To make me feel the Woes of other Men,
And labour to redreſs 'em. —— Sacred Powers,
Root from the fair Creation thoſe dire Fiends,
Who place their Joy in Plunder and Oppreſſion.

ZAPH. [*Apart.*] What Melody theſe Accents make! My Soul
Turns its each Faculty into Attention;
And whilſt my own Religion ſpurs to murder,
His Precepts of Humanity prevail.
[*To* Alc.] Can then a Foe to *Mah'met*'s ſacred Law,
Be Virtue's Friend?

ALC. Thou know'ſt but little, *Zaphna*,
If thou doſt think true Virtue is confin'd
To Climes or Syſtems; no, it flows ſpontaneous,
Like Life's warm Stream throughout the whole Creation,
And beats the Pulſe of ev'ry healthful Heart.
Thy tender Spirit, by this Tyrant form'd,
Holds all but *Muſſulmen* for Criminals.
Thou look'ſt on me with Horror, ere thou know'ſt me;

Whilſt

Whilſt barb'rous Prejudice with Yoke of Iron
Weighs down thy Reaſon, warps thy honeſt Soul,
And turns thy Actions counter to thy Will.
How canſt thou, *Zaphna*, worſhip for thy God
A Being claiming Cruelty and Murders
From his Adorers? Such is thy Maſter's God ——

ZAPH. [*Apart.*] O my relenting Soul! thou'rt almoſt thaw'd
From thy Reſolve. —— I pray you, Sir, no more;
Talk me not into Treaſon againſt Heav'n,
And *Mahomet* at once. [*Apart.*] Peace, Reaſon, Peace!
Oft' has our Prophet ſaid, thy Earth-ſprung Dictates,
Like the bewild'ring Meteor of the Night,
Delude the Wretch who truſts their flatt'ring Shine.

ALC. [*Apart.*] The more I view him, talk with him, obſerve
His Underſtanding tow'ring 'bove his Age;
His Candor, which ev'n Bigotry can't ſmother;
And all the radiant undiſſembled Virtues
Which emanate from his accompliſh'd Soul;
The more my Breaſt takes Int'reſt in his Welfare.
[*To* Zaphna.] *Zaphna*, come near —— I oft have thought to aſk thee,
To whom thou ow'ſt thy Birth; whoſe gen'rous Blood
Swells thy young Veins, and mantles at thy Heart.

ZAPH. That dwells in Darkneſs, no one friendly Beam
E'er gave me glimpſe from whom I am deſcended.
The Camp of Godlike *Mahomet* has been
My Cradle, and my Country; whilſt of all
His captive Infants no one more has ſhar'd
The Sunſhine of his Clemency and Care.

ALC. I do not blame thy Gratitude, young Man.
But why was *Mahomet* thy Benefactor?

Why was not I? I envy him that Glory.
Heav'ns! it reflects ſuch Luſtre on himſelf,
As half atones for his attrocious Crimes.
Why then, this impious Man has been a Father
Alike to thee, and to the fair *Palmira*.

ZAPH. Oh!

ALC. What's the Cauſe, my *Zaphna*, of that Sigh,
And all that Language of a ſmother'd Anguiſh?
Why didſt thou ſnatch away thy cordial Eye,
That ſhone on me before?

ZAPH. [*Apart.*] O my torn Heart!
Palmira's Name revives the racking Thought
Of my near blunted Purpoſe.

ALC. Come, my Friend:
The Flood-gates of Deſtruction ſoon thrown ope,
Will pour in Ruin on that Curſe of Nations.
If I can ſave but thee, and fair *Palmira*,
From this o'erflowing Tide, let all the reſt
Of his abandon'd Minions be the Victims
For your Deliverance —— I muſt ſave your Blood.

ZAPH. [*Apart*] Juſt Heav'n! and is't not I muſt ſhed his Blood?

ALC. Nay, tremble, if thou dar'ſt to heſitate ——
Follow me ſtraight.

Enter PHARON.

PHA. *Alcanor* read that Letter,
Put in my Hands this Moment by an *Arab*
With utmoſt Stealth, and Air beſpeaking ſomewhat
Of high Importance.

ALC. [*Reads.*] Whence is this? —— *Hercides!*
Cautious, my Eyes! be ſure you're not miſtaken
In what you here inſinuate. Gracious Heav'n!
[illegible] at length o'er-rule

My wayward Fate, and by one matchleſs Bleſſing,
Sweeten the Suff'rings of a Threeſcore Years!

[*After looking, for ſome time, earneſtly at* Zaphna.

Follow me.

ZAPH. Thee! —— But *Mahomet* ——

ALC. Thy Life
And all its future Bliſs dwells on this Moment.
Follow, I ſay. [*Exeunt* Alcanor *and* Pharon.

Enter MIRVAN *and his Attendants haſtily on the other Side of the Stage.*

MIR. [*To* Zaph.] Traitor, turn back; what means
This Conference with the Foe? To *Mahomet*
Away, this Inſtant, he commands thy Preſence.

ZAPH. [*Apart*] Where am I? Heav'n's! How ſhall I now reſolve!
How act! A Precipice on ev'ry ſide
Awaits me, and the firſt leaſt Step's Perdition.

MIR. Young Man, our Prophet brooks not ſuch Delay;
Go, ſtop the Bolt that's ready to be launch'd
On thy rebellious Head.

ZAPH. Yes, and renounce
This horrid Vow, that's Poiſon to my Soul.

[*Exit with* Mirvan, *&c.*

Re-enter ALCANOR *and* PHARON.

ALC. Where is this *Zaphna?* —— But he flies me ſtill:
In vain I call in all the ſoft'ning Arts
Of Pity, Love, and Friendſhip to engage him:
His Breaſt is ſear'd by that Impoſtor's Precepts
'Gainſt all who bid Defiance to his Laws.
But, *Pharon*, didſt thou mark the baneful Gloom,
The ſomewhat like Reluctance, Rage, and Pity,
That blended ſat upon his penſive Brow?

PHA.

PHA. I did; There's ſomething at his Heart ——

ALC. There is ——

Would I could fathom it! this Letter, *Pharon*,
His Aſpect, Age; the Tranſport that I taſte
When he is near me; the Anxiety
His Abſence gives, do too much Violence
To my diſtracted Senſe. *Hercides* here
Deſires to ſee me; 'twas his barbarous Hands
That robb'd me of my Children; They are living,
He tells me, under *Mahomet*'s Protection;
And he has ſomething to unfold, on which
Their Deſtiny and mine depends. This *Zaphna*
And young *Palmira*, Vaſſals of that Tyrant,
Are ignorant from whom they are deſcended.
Imagination's pregnant with the Thought.
My Wiſhes mock me. Sinking with my Grief,
I blindly catch at ev'ry flatt'ring Error,
And ſupplicate Deception's Self for Succour.

PHA. Hope, but yet fear, *Alcanor*; think, my Chief,
How many Infants from their Parents torn,
E're conſcious whoſe they are, attend that Tyrant,
Drink in his Dictates, place their Being in him,
And deem him an infallible Diſpenſer
Of Heav'n's Deciſions ——

ALC. Well, no matter, *Pharon*.
At Noon of Night conduct *Hercides* hither:
Thy Maſter, in th' adjoining Fane, once more
Will importune the Gods with Prayers and Incenſe,
That he may ſave his Friends, and ſee his Children.

PHA. Thou ſhalt not find thy *Pharon* ſlack in ought,
That tends to thy Deliverance from this Anguiſh.

[*Exit* Pharon.

ALC.

ALC. Juſt Heav'n, if by erroneous Thought or Act,
I have drawn down your fierce Diſpleaſure on me,
Point me to Right; I'll onward to its Goal
With double Energy; will expiate all,
That in the Days of Ignorance might offend.
Only reſtore my Children to my Care,
Give to my craving Arms my hapleſs Children,
That I may form them, turn 'em back from Wrong,
Weed their young Minds of thoſe pernicious Errors
The Arch-Impoſtor has implanted in 'em;
Train 'em in Virtue's School, and lead them on
To Deeds of Glorious and Immortal Honour.

[*Exit.*

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

MAHOMET's *Apartment.*

MAHOMET *alone.*

AMBITION knows not Conſcience —— Well,
this *Zaphna*
Is fix'd at length —— I leſſon'd him ſo home,
Dealt to his young enthuſiaſtick Soul
Such Promiſes and Threats ——

Enter MIRVAN.

Mirvan, What News?

MIR. O, *Mahomet,* I fear the Nice-wov'n Web
Of our Deſign's unravell'd. E'er thy Spirit
Had re-inflam'd young *Zaphna* with the Thirſt
Of old *Alcanor*'s Blood, he had reveal'd
The dreadful Purpoſe to *Hercides.* ——

MAH. Hah!

MIR. *Hercides* loves the Youth, and *Zaphna* ſtill
Has held him as a Father.

MAH. That, I like not.
What does *Hercides* ſay? thinks he with us?

MIR. O no; he trembles at the very Thought
Of this dread Scene, compaſſionates *Alcanor,*
And ——

MAH. He's but half a Friend then, and half-Friend
Is not a Span from Traitor. *Mirvan, Mirvan,*
A dangerous Witneſs muſt be ſomeway dealt with;
Am I obey'd?

MIR. 'Tis done.

MAH. Then for the reſt———
Or e'er the Harbinger of 'Morrow's Dawn
Gleam in the Eaſt, *Alcanor* thou muſt ſet,
Or *Mahomet* and all his Hopes muſt periſh.
That's the firſt Step then - - - *Zaphna*, next for thee.
Soon as thy Hands have dealt the midnight Miſchief,
In thy own Blood the Secret muſt be drown'd.
Thus quit of Son and Father (thoſe curſt Rivals
Who elbow me at once in Love and Grandeur,)
Both *Mecca*, and *Palmira*, ſhall be mine.
O tow'ring Proſpect! How it fills the Eye
Of my aſpiring, and enamour'd Soul!
Night, put on double Sable, that no Star
May be a Spy on thoſe dark Deeds —— Well, *Mirvan*,
Shall we accompliſh this?

MIR. We ſhall, my Chief.

MAH. What tho' I ſeize his Life from whom ſhe ſprung?
He's not her Father as ſhe knows it not.
Truſt me, thoſe partial Ties of Blood, and Kindred,
Are but th' illuſive Taints of Education:
What we call Nature is mere Habit, *Mirvan*;
That Habit's on our Side; for the whole Study
Of this young Creature's Life has been Obedience;
To Think, Believe, and Act, as pleaſur'd me.
But hold, the Hour, on which our Fortune hangs,
Is now at hand. While *Zaphna* ſeeks the Temple,
Let us look round us, ſee that not a Wheel
Lag in the vaſt Machine we have at Work.
It is Succeſs that conſecrates our Actions.
The vanquiſh'd Rebel, as a Rebel, dies;
The Victor-Rebel plumes him on a Throne.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE *changes to the Temple.*

Enter ZAPHNA, *with a drawn Sword in his Hand.*

ZAPH. Well then, it muſt be ſo ; I muſt diſcharge
This cruel Duty —— *Mahomet* enjoins it,
And Heav'n thro' him demands it of my Hands.
Horrid, tho' ſacred Act ! —— My Soul ſhrinks back,
And won't admit Conviction —— Ay, but Heav'n !
Heav'n's Call I muſt obey —— O dire Obedience,
What doſt thou coſt me ? My Humanity !
Why, Duty, art thou thus at War with Nature ?

Enter PALMIRA.

Thou here, *Palmira !* O ! what fatal Tranſport
Leads thee to this ſad Place, theſe dark Abodes,
Sacred to Death ? Thou haſt no Buſineſs here.

PAL. O *Zaphna*, Fear, and Love, have been my Guides.
What horrid Sacrifice is this enjoin'd thee ?
What Victim does the God of *Mahomet*
Claim from thy tender Hand ?

ZAPH. My Guardian Angel,
On whoſe Determination ever turns
The Hinge of my Elections ; ſpeak, reſolve me ;
How can Aſſaſſination be a Virtue ?
How can the gracious Parent of Mankind
Delight in Mankind's Suff'rings ? Mayn't this Prophet,
This great Announcer of his heav'nly Will,
Miſtake it once ?

PAL. O tremble to Examine.
He ſees our Hearts —— To Doubt, is to Blaſpheme.

ZAPH.

ZAPH. Be ſteady then my Soul, firm to thy Purpoſe,
And let Religion ſteel thee againſt Pity.
Come forth, thou Foe to *Mahomet* and Heav'n,
And meet the Doom thy Rebel Faith deſerves;
Come forth, *Alcanor*.

PAL. Who? *Alcanor!*

ZAPH. Yes.

PAL. The good *Alcanor!*

ZAPH. Why d'ye call him Good?
Can Impious have Fellowſhip with Good?
Curſe on his Pagan Virtues! He muſt die;
So *Mahomet* commands. And yet, methinks,
Some other Deity arreſts my Arm,
And whiſpers to my Heart——*Zaphna*, forbear.

PAL. Diſtracting State!

ZAPH. Alas, my dear *Palmira*,
I'm weak, and ſhudder at this bloody Buſ'neſs:
Yet the Beheſt of Heav'n, howe'er it ſeem
To croſs on Nature, or take Captive Reaſon,
Is ſacred to the Will, and claims Obedience.
Help me, O help, *Palmira*; I am torn,
Diſtracted with this Conflict in my Breaſt.
I'd not be barbarous, nor ſacrilegious;
I find, I wear not an Aſſaſſin's Heart,
Yet Heav'n here bids me wear Aſſaſſin's Hands.
Zeal, Horror, Love, and Pity ſeize my Breaſt,
And drag it diff'rent Ways. Alas, *Palmira*,
You ſee me toſſing on a Sea of Paſſions,
An Ebb and Flow of Contrarieties,
Which now ſeem kindly wafting me to Shore,
And the next Moment plunge me back again
Into the Boſom of th' outragious Deep.

'Tis thine, my Angel, to appeaſe this Tempeſt,
Fix my diſtracted Will, and teach me ——

PAL. ——— What?
What can I teach thee in this Strife of Paſſions?
O *Zaphna!* I revere our holy Prophet,
Think all his Laws are regiſter'd in Heav'n,
And every Mandate minted in the Skies;

ZAPH. But then to break through Hoſpitality,
And murder him by whom we are protected!
O! it makes Reaſon ſtagger, Will rebell,
And the whole Tribe of the exalted Paſſions
Riſe up in Arms, and combat with the Duty.

PAL. O poor *Alcanor!* gen'rous, good *Alcanor!*
My Heart bleeds for thee.

ZAPH. Does it bleed for him?
Were *Zaphna*'s Fate as piteous as his
'Twould bleed for *Zaphna* too.

PAL. Canſt thou doubt that?

ZAPH. Know then, unleſs I act this horrid Scene;
Unleſs I plunge this Dagger in the Breaſt
Of that old Man, I muſt be more undone,
A more forlorn, abandon'd, ſhipwreck'd Wretch,
Than Earth e'er bore. I muſt ——

PAL. What ——

ZAPH. Muſt, *Palmira* ——
(O agonizing Thought!) loſe thee for ever.
This Tyrant Prophet (Heav'n forgive my Raſhneſs!)
Our Royal Pontiff makes this Sacrifice
The Price, by which I muſt obtain *Palmira.*

PAL. Am I the Price of good *Alcanor*'s Blood?

ZAPH. So *Mahomet* ordains.

PAL. Can Cruelty
And Love join Hands?

ZAPH. Alas, they muſt, *Palmira*,
If ours are ever join'd. Heav'n's Subſtitute
Will give thee only to a Murderer.
PAL. Horrible Dow'ry!
ZAPH. But if Heav'n enjoins it,
If by this dreadful Action I can ſerve
Love and Religion ———
PAL. Is that poſſible?
ZAPH. Thou know'ſt the Curſe our Prophet has denounc'd
Of endleſs Tortures on the Diſobedient:
Thou know'ſt with what an Oath I've bound myſelf,
To vindicate his Laws, extirpate all
That dare oppoſe his Progreſs. Say then, Fair One,
Thou Tutoreſs divine, inſtruct me how,
How to obey my Chief, perform my Oath,
Yet liſt to Mercy's Call.
PAL. This rends my Heart.
ZAPH. How to avoid being baniſh'd thee for ever.
PAL. O ſave me from that Thought! muſt that e'er be?
ZAPH. It muſt not: Thou haſt now pronounc'd his Doom.
PAL. What Doom? —— Have I!
ZAPH. Yes, thou haſt ſeal'd his Death.
PAL. What did I ſay? I ſeal his Death! did I?
ZAPH. 'Twas Heav'n ſpoke by thee; thou'rt its Oracle,
And I'll fulfil its Laws. This is the Hour
In which he pays at the adjoining Altar
Black Rites to his imaginary Gods.
Follow me not, *Palmira*.
PAL. I muſt follow,
I will not, dare not leave thee.

ZAPH.

ZAPH. Gentle Maid,
I beg thee fly theſe Walls, thou can'ſt not bear
This horrid Scene —— O theſe are dreadful Moments!
Be gone —— quick —— this Way ——
PAL. No, I'll follow thee,
Retread thy ev'ry Footſtep, tho' they lead
To the dark Gulph of Death. There is no Horror
So chilling to the Blood, not any Anguiſh
So bitter to the Soul but I could ſuffer
With Tranſport, rather than the ſingle Thought
That *Zaphna* felt one Pang I did not ſhare.
ZAPH. Thou matchleſs Maid! —— To the dire Trial then. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *draws, and diſcovers the inner Part of the Temple, with a Pagan Altar and Images.* Alcanor *addreſſing himſelf to the Idols.*

ALCANOR.

Eternal Powers, that deign to bleſs theſe Manſions,
Protectors of the Sons of *Iſhmael*,
Attend the Vows I offer for my Country.
Let *Mecca* ſtand ſecure amongſt the Nations,
And ſtem the Rage of Rapine and Impoſture.
Blaſt, blaſt this blaſphemous Invader's Force,
And turn him back with Shame. If Pow'r be yours,
O ſhield your injur'd Votaries, and lay
Oppreſſion bleeding at your Altar's Foot.

Enter

Enter ZAPHNA *and* PALMIRA.

PAL. [*Entring.*] Act not this bloody Deed; O ſave him, ſave him.

ZAPH. Save him, and loſe both Paradiſe and Thee!

PAL. Hah! yon he ſtands. — O *Zaphna*, all my Blood
Is frozen at the Sight.

ALC. 'Tis in your own Behalf that I implore
The Terrors of your Might; 'Tis the laſt Hour
You'll e'er be worſhipp'd in this ſacred Dome,
This hallow'd *Caaba*, unleſs you ſwift
Pour Vengeance on this vile Apoſtate's Head,
Who dares profanely wreſt your Thunder from you,
And lodge it with an unknown, fancy'd God.

ZAPH. Hear how the Wretch blaſphemes! So, now—

PAL. Hold, *Zaphna*.

ZAPH. Let me go ——

PAL. I cannot —— cannot.

ALC. But if, for Reaſons, which dim-ſighted Mortals
Can't look into, you'll crown this daring Rebel
With Royalty and Prieſthood, take my Life.
And if, ye gracious Pow'rs, you've ought of Bliſs
In ſtore for me, at my laſt Hour permit me
To ſee my Children, pour my Bleſſing on them,
Expire in their dear Arms; and let them cloſe
Theſe Eyes, which then would wiſh no After-Sight.

PAL. His Children, did he ſay?

ZAPH. I think he did ——

ALC. For this I'll at your Altar pay my Vows,
And make it ſmoke with Incenſe.

[*Retires behind the Altar.*

ZAPH. Now's the Time. [*Drawing his Sword.*

Inſulting

Inſulting Heav'n, he flies to Stones for Refuge:
Now let me ſtrike.

PAL. Stay but one Moment, *Zaphna.*

ZAPH. It muſt not be —— unhand me.

PAL. What to do?

ZAPH. To ſerve my God and King, and merit thee.

[*Breaking from* Palmira, *and going towards the Altar, he ſtarts, and ſtops ſhort.*

Ha! what are ye, ye terrifying Shades?
What means this Lake of Blood that lies before me?

PAL. O *Zaphna*, let us fly theſe horrid Roofs.

ZAPH. No, no —— Go on, ye Miniſters of Death;
Lead me the Way. I'll follow ye.

PAL. Stay, *Zaphna.*
Heap no more Horrors on me; I'm expiring
Beneath the Load.

ZAPH. Be huſht —— the Altar trembles!
What means that Omen? Does it ſpur to Murder,
Or would it rein me back? No, 'tis the Voice
Of Heav'n itſelf, that chides my lingering Hand.
Now ſend up thither all thy Vows, *Palmira*,
Whilſt I obey its Will, and give the Stroke.

[*Goes out behind the Altar after* Alcanor.

PAL. What Vows! will Heav'n receive a Murderer's Vows?
For ſure I'm ſuch, whilſt I prevent not Murder.
Why beats my Heart thus? What ſoft Voice is this
That's waken'd in my Soul, and preaches Mercy?
If Heav'n demands his Life, dare I oppoſe?
Is it my Place to judge? —— Hah! that dire Groan
Proclaims the bloody Buſ'neſs is about.
Zaphna! O *Zaphna!*

Re-enter

Re-enter ZAPHNA.

ZAPH. Hah! where am I?
Who calls me? Where's *Palmira?* She's not here:
What Fiend has ſnatch'd her from me?
PAL. Heav'ns! he raves!
Doſt thou not know me, *Zaphna?* her who lives
For thee alone? —— Why doſt thou gaze thus on me?
ZAPH. Where are we?
PAL. Haſt thou then diſcharg'd
The horrid Duty?
ZAPH. What doſt ſay?
PAL. *Alcanor* ——
ZAPH. *Alcanor!* what, *Alcanor?*
PAL. Graeious Heav'n,
Look down upon him!
Let's be gone, my *Zaphna,*
Let's fly this Place.
ZAPH. O whither fly! to whom?
D'ye ſee theſe Hands? Who will receive theſe Hands?
PAL. O come, and let me waſh them with my Tears.
ZAPH. Who art thou? let me lean on thee —— I find
My Pow'rs returning. Is it thou, *Palmira?*
Where have I been? What have I done?
PAL. I know not.
Think on't no more.
ZAPH. But I muſt think, and talk on't too, *Palmira.*
I ſeiz'd the Victim by his hoary Locks ——
(Thou, Heav'n, did'ſt will it — can'ſt thou will a Crime!)
Then, ſhuddering with Horror, buried ſtrait
The Poinard in his Breaſt. I had redoubled
The bloody Plunge —— (what cannot Zeal perſuade!)

But

But that the venerable Sire pour'd forth
So piteous a Groan; look'd ſo, *Palmira*, ——
And with a feeble Voice cry'd, Is it *Zaphna?*
I could no more. O had'ſt thou ſeen, my Love,
The fell, fell Dagger in his Boſom, view'd
His dying Face, where ſat ſuch Dignity,
Cloath'd with Compaſſion tow'rds his baſe Aſſaſſin;
'Twould have converted thee to breathleſs Marble,
And made thee, to Futurity, at once,
A Monument of Cruelty and Pity.
[*Throwing himſelf on the Ground.*
The dire Remembrance weighs me to the Earth ——
Here let me die ——

PAL. Riſe, my lov'd *Zaphna*, riſe,
And let us fly to *Mah'met* for Protection.
If we are found in theſe Abodes of Slaughter,
Tortures and Death attend us; let us fly.

ZAPH. [*Starting up.*] I did fly at that blaſting Sight, *Palmira.*
When, drawing out the fatal Steel, he caſt
Such tender Looks! I fled —— The fatal Steel,
The Voice, the tender Looks, the bleeding Victim
Bleſſing his Murderer —— I cou'd not fly:
No, they clung to me, riv'd my throbbing Heart,
And ſet my Brain on Fire. What have we done?

PAL. Hark! What's that Noiſe? I tremble for thy Life.
O, in the Name of Love, by all the Ties,
Thoſe ſacred Ties that bind thee mine for ever,
I do conjure thee, follow me.

ZAPH. Be gone ——
Leave me. Say, was't not the Deſtroyer, Love,
That urg'd me on to this deteſted Deed?
Had it not been for thee, conſulting thee,

But

But for thy irreſiſtible Deciſion,
I had been deaf to Heav'n, and ſpurn'd its Order.

PAL. Why doſt thou load me with this dire Reproach?
O *Zaphna*, this is Cruelty indeed!
Was not my Soul abhorrent of the Action,
As much as thine? did not I call thee back?
Didſt not thou ſhake me off by Violence,
When I hung on thee, would have forc'd thy Stay?

[Alcanor *comes from behind the Altar, leaning againſt it, with the bloody Sword in his Hand.*

ZAPH. Hah! look, *Palmira*, ſee; what Object's that
Which bears upon my tortur'd Sight? Is't he?
Or is't his bloody *Manes* come to haunt us?

PAL. 'Tis he himſelf, poor Wretch! ſtruggling with Death,
And feebly crawling tow'rds us. Let me fly,
And yield what Help I can. Let me ſupport thee,
Thou much lamented, injur'd, good old Man.

ZAPH. Why don't I move? My Feet are rooted here,
And all my Frame is ſtruck, and wither'd up,
As with the Lightning's Blaſt.

ALC. My gentle Maid,
Wilt thou ſupport me?
Weep not, my *Palmira*.

PAL. I could weep Tears of Blood, if that would ſerve thee.

ALC. [*Sitting down.*] *Zaphna*, come hither; thou haſt ta'en my Life;
For what Offence, or what one Thought towards thee
That Anger or Malevolence gave birth,
Heav'n knows I am unconſcious. Do not look ſo;
I ſee thou doſt relent.

Enter PHARON *haſtily.*

PHA. [*Starting back.*] Hah! 'tis too late then.

ALC. Would I could ſee *Hercides!* —— *Pharon*, lo,
Thy martyr'd Friend, by his diſtemper'd Hand,
Is now expiring.

PHA. Dire, unnatural Crime!
O wretched Parricide! —— behold thy Father.
[*Pointing to* Alcanor,

ZAPH. My Father!

PAL. Father! Hah!

ALC. Myſterious Heav'n!

PHA. *Hercides*, dying by the Hand of *Mirvan*,
Who ſlew him, leſt he ſhould betray the Secret,
Saw me approach, and, in the Pangs of Death,
Cry'd, Fly, and ſave *Alcanor*; wreſt the Sword
From *Zaphna*'s Hand, if 'tis not yet too late,
That's deſtin'd for his Death; then let him know
That *Zaphna* and *Palmira* are his Children.

PAL. That *Zaphna* and *Palmira* are his Children!
Doſt hear that, *Zaphna!*

ZAPH. 'Tis enough, my Fate!
Canſt thou ought more?

ALC. O Nature! O my Children!
By what vile Inſtigations wert thou driven,
Unhappy *Zaphna*, to this bloody Action?

ZAPH. [*Falling at his Father's Feet.*] Love of my Duty, Nation and Religion,
Inſpir'd me with the raſh, accurſed Zeal,
To perpetrate an Act more black, more horrid,
Than e'er the Sun caſt Eye on, than e'er Tears
Can cleanſe from its foul Stain, than e'er ſweet Mercy

Can

Can intercede for, or than Hell can puniſh.
Reſtore me, Sir, reſtore that damned Weapon,
That I for once may make it, as I ought,
An Inſtrument of Juſtice.

PAL. [*Kneeling.*] O my Father,
Strike here, the Crime was mine; 'twas I alone
That work'd his Will to this unnatural Deed.
Upon theſe Terms alone he cou'd be mine,
And Inceſt was the Price of Parricide.

ZAPH. Strike your Aſſaſſins ——

ALC. I embrace my Children;
And joy to ſee them, tho' my Life's the Forfeit.
Kind Heav'n thus mingles in my bitter Cup
So ſweet a Conſolation, that I bleſs
My Deſtiny, and think the Draught divine.
Riſe, Children, riſe and live; live to revenge
Your Father's Death.——But, in the Name of Nature,
By the Remains of this Paternal Blood
That's oozing from my Wound, raiſe not your Hands
'Gainſt your own Being. *Zaphna,* woud'ſt thou do me
A ſecond deadlier Miſchief thro' thyſelf?
Then thou wou'dſt ſtab me to the Heart indeed:
Self-Slaughter can't atone for Parricide.

ZAPH. Go on, Sir, pray go on: Then I will live,
Live to ſome Purpoſe; this is glorious Suffering.
Ten thouſand Swords had been a Needle's Point,
To this moſt exquiſitely torturing Goodneſs:
Bleſſing, where Curſing's due, is Cruelty.

ALC. Thy undetermin'd Arm han't quite fulfill'd
Its Bigot-Purpoſe; Morn's at hand, the Truce
Is broke; I hope to live to animate
Our Friends 'gainſt this Impoſtor; lead 'em, *Zaphna,*

To

To root out a rapacious baneful Crew,
Whoſe Zeal is Phrenzy, whoſe Religion Murder.

ZAPH. Swift, ſwift, ye Hours! Celeſtial Charioteer,
Laſh on thy Courſers! light me to Revenge!
Why linger for the Day? Flaming Revenge
Is Torch ſufficient. Inſtantly I'll fly
Through ev'ry Street, rend with my bitter Cries
The Cypreſs Veil of Sleep; ſound ſuch a Trump
As might burſt ope Death's Palace, and awake
His breathleſs Guards. Then, then, infernal Weapon,
[*Snatches the bloody Sword.*
I'll waſh off thy foul Stain with the Heart's Blood
Of that malignant ſanctify'd Aſſaſſin.

[*As* Zaphna *is going off,* Mirvan *and his Followers enter and ſtop him.*

MIR. Seize *Zaphna*,
And load the traiterous Murderer with Chains.
Help you the good *Alcanor*.——Hapleſs Man!
Our Prophet, in a Viſion, learnt To-night
The mournful Tale of thy untimely End,
And ſent me ſtraight to ſeize the vile Aſſaſſin,
That he might wreck ſevereſt Juſtice on him.
Mahomet comes to vindicate the Laws,
Not ſuffer, with Impunity, their Breach.

ALC. Heav'ns! what accumulated Crimes are here!

ZAPH. Where is the Monſter? Bear me inſtant to him,
That I may blaſt him with my Eye, may curſe him
With my laſt heſitating Voice.

PAL. Thou Tyrant,
Did not thy own Death-doing Tongue enjoin
This horrid Deed?

MIR. Not mine, by Heav'n!

ZAPH. Not thine!

MIR.

MIR. No, by our Prophet, and his holy Faith,
Of all the Thoughts e'er harbour'd in this Breaſt,
It ne'er had ſuch a Monſter for its Tenant.

ZAPH. Doſt hear him, Heav'n? O moſt accompliſh'd Villain!
Mirvan, look at me —— dar'ſt thou ——

MIR. Off with him, [*To the Soldiers.*
And ſee him well ſecur'd, till *Mahomet*
Demands him of you.

PAL. Villain, hold! [*Laying hold of* Zaphna.

MIR. Away.

ZAPH. Juſt, juſt Reward of my Credulity!

PAL. Let me go with him; I will ſhare thy Fate,
Unhappy *Zaphna*, for I ſhare thy Guilt.
But then —— [*Looking back at* Alcanor.

MIR. No more —— you muſt to *Mahomet*.
Obey without Reluctance; our great Prophet
In Pity to your tender Frame and Years,
Will take you under his divine Protection.

PAL. [*Apart.*] O Death, deliver me from ſuch Protection.

MIR. If you would ought to ſave the deſtin'd *Zaphna*,
Follow me to the Prophet, you may move him
To mitigate his Doom. —— Away.
[*To the Soldiers who hold* Zaphna.
You this Way. [*To* Palmira.

ZAPH. Pardon!

PAL. O Pardon!
[*They are led off by Degrees, looking alternately at their Father and each other.*

ALC. What a Wretch now am I!
Both from me torn, then when I wanted moſt
Their Conſolation.

PHA-

PHA. Did you hear that Shout?
The Citizens are rous'd, and all in Arms
Ruſh on to your Defence.
ALC. *Pharon*, ſupport me
Some Moments longer. ——— Help, conduct me tow'rds 'em,
Bare this Wound to 'em; let that ſpeak the Cauſe,
The treach'rous Cauſe, for Words begin to fail me:
Then, if in Death I can but ſerve my Country,
Save my poor Children from this Tyger's Gripe,
And give a ſecond Life to that lov'd Pair,
By whoſe miſguided Zeal I loſe my own;
What Patriot, or Parent, but would wiſh
In ſo divine a Cauſe to fall a Martyr! [*Exeunt.*

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

MAHOMET *and* MIRVAN.

MAHOMET.

WRONG will be ever nurs'd and fed with Blood.——
So! this Boy-bigot held his pious Purpoſe?
MIR. Devoutly.
MAH. What a reaſonleſs Machine
Can Superſtition make the Reas'ner Man!
Alcanor lies then on his Bed of Earth?
MIR. This Moment he expir'd, and *Mecca*'s Youth
In vain lament their Chief. To the mad Crowd
That gather'd round, good *Ali*, and myſelf,
(Full of thy dauntleſs heav'nly-ſeeming Spirit)
Diſclaim'd the Deed, and pointed out the Arm
Of righteous Heav'n, that ſtrikes for *Mahomet*.——
" Think ye, we cried, (with Eyes and Hands uprear'd)
" Think ye our holy Prophet would conſent
" To ſuch a Crime, whoſe Foulneſs caſts a Blot
" On Right of Nations, Nature, and our Faith?
" O rather think he will avenge his Death,
" And root his Murd'rer from the burden'd Earth;"
Then ſtruck our Breaſts, and wept the good old Man;
And only wiſh'd, " He'd dy'd among the Faithful,
" And ſlept with *Ibrahim*."
MAH. Excellent *Mirvan!*
MIR. We then both at large
Deſcanted on thy Clemency and Bounty.

On

On that, the ſilent and deſponding Crowd
Broke out in Murmurs, Plaints, and laſt in Shouts,
And each Mechanick grew a *Muſſulman*.

MAH. O worthy to deceive, and awe the World,
Second to *Mahomet!* Let me embrace thee.——
But ſay, is not our Army at their Gates,
To back our Clemency?

MIR. *Omar* commands
Their nightly March thro' unſuſpected Paths,
And with the Morn appears.

MAH. At Sight of them,
The weak remaining Billows of this Storm
Will laſh themſelves to Peace.—But where is *Zaphna?*

MIR. Safe in a Dungeon, where he dies apace,
Unconſcious of his Fate; for well thou know'ſt,
Whilſt at the Altar's Foot he ſlew his Sire,
In his own Veins he bore his Guilt's Reward.

MAH. I would be kind, and let him die deceiv'd,
Nor know that Parent-Blood defiles his Soul.

MIR. He cannot know it: If the Grave be ſilent,
I'm ſure *Hercides* is ———

MAH. Unhappy *Zaphna!*
Something like Pity checks me for thy Death.
But why —— I muſt not think that way —— ſhall *Mahomet*
Give a new Paradiſe to all Mankind,
And let Remorſe and Conſcience be the Hell
Of his own Breaſt! My Safety claim'd his Life,
And all the Heav'n of fair *Palmira*'s Charms
Shall be my great Reward.

MIR. My noble Lord,
Palmira is at hand, and waits your Pleaſure.

MAH.

MAH. At Hand! How, *Mirvan*, could'ſt thou let me talk
On Themes of Guilt when that pure Angel's near?

MIR. The weeping Fair, led on by flatt'ring Hope
Of *Zaphna*'s Life, attends your ſacred Will.
A ſilent, pale Dejection ſhrowds her Cheeks,
And, like the Lilly in a Morning Show'r,
She droops her Head, and locks up all her Sweets.

MAH. But now, *Mirvan*,
Aſſemble all our Chiefs; and on this Platform
Let them attend me ſtraight. [*Exit* Mirvan

Enter PALMIRA, *with Attendants.*

PAL. [*Apart.*] Where have they led me?
Methinks each Step I take, the mangled Corpſe
Of my dear Father, (by poor *Zaphna* mangled,)
Lies in my Way, and all I ſee is Blood —— [*Starting.*
'Tis the Impoſtor's Self——Burſt, Heart, in Silence.

MAH. Maid, lay aſide this Dread. *Palmira*'s Fate,
And that of *Mecca*, by my Will is fixt.
This great Event that fills thy Soul with Horror,
Is Myſtery to all but Heav'n and *Mahomet*.

PAL. [*Apart.*] O ever-righteous Heav'n, canſt thou ſuffer
This ſacrilegious Hypocrite, this Spoiler,
To ſteal thy Terrors, and blaſpheme thy Name,
Nor doom him inſtant dead?

MAH. Child of my Care,
At length from galling Chains I've ſet thee free,
And made thee triumph in a juſt Revenge:
Think then thou'rt dear to me; and *Mahomet*
Regards thee with a more than Father's Eye:

Then know, (if thou'lt deſerve the mighty Boon)
An higher Name, a nobler Fate awaits thee.

PAL. What wou'd the Tyrant? ——

MAH. Raiſe thy Thoughts to Glory,
And ſweep this *Zaphna* from thy Memory,
With all that's paſt —— Let that mean Flame expire,
Before the Blaze of Empire's radiant Sun.
Thy grateful Heart muſt anſwer to my Bounties,
Follow my Laws, and ſhare in all my Conqueſts.

PAL. What Laws! What Bounties! And what Conqueſts, Tyrant!
Fraud is thy Law, the Tomb thy only Bounty;
Thy Conqueſts fatal as infected Air,
Diſpeopling half the Globe.——See here, good Heav'n,
The venerable Prophet I rever'd,
The King I ſerv'd, the God that I ador'd.

MAH. [*Approaching her.*] Whence this unwonted Language, this wild Phrenzy?

PAL. Where is the Spirit of my martyr'd Father?
Where all the Odour of my *Zaphna*'s Fame?
Where poor *Palmira*'s Infant Innocence?
Blaſted be thee, by thee, infernal Monſter ——
Thou found'ſt us Angels, and haſt made us Fiends:
Give, give us back our Lives, our Fame, our Virtue,
Thou can'ſt not, Tyrant; —— Yet thou ſeek'ſt my Love.
Seek'ſt with *Alcanor*'s Blood his Daughter's Love.

MAH. [*Apart.*] Horror, and Death! The fatal Secret's known!

Enter MIRVAN.

MIR. O *Mahomet*, all's loſt! Thy Glory tarniſh'd,
And the inſatiate Tomb ripe to devour us.
Hercides' parting Breath divulg'd the Secret;
The Priſon's forc'd, the City all in Arms.

See where they bear aloft their murder'd Chief,
Fell *Zaphna* in their Front: Death in his Looks,
Rage all his Strength. Spight of the deadly Draught
He holds in Life but to make ſure of Vengeance.

MAH. What doſt thou here then? Inſtant with our Guards,
Attempt to ſtem their Progreſs, 'till th' Arrival
Of *Omar* with the Troops.

MIR. I haſte, my Lord. [*Exit* Mirvan.

PAL. Now, now thy Hour's at hand.
Hear'ſt thou thoſe Shouts, that rend the ambient Air?
See'ſt thou thoſe glancing Fires, that add new Horrors
To the Night's Gloom? Freſh from thy murd'ring Poinard,
(For thine it was, tho' *Zaphna* gave the Blow,)
My Father's Spirit leads the vengeful Shades,
Of all the Wretches whom thy Sword has butcher'd.
I ſee them raiſe their unſubſtantial Arms
To ſnatch me from thy Rage, or worſe, thy Love.
Shadows ſhall conquer in *Palmira*'s Cauſe.

MAH. [*Apart.*] What Terror's this that hangs upon her Accents?
I feel her Virtue, tho' I know her Weakneſs.

PAL. Thou ask'ſt my Love! go, ſeek it in the Grave
Of good *Alcanor*.——Talk'ſt of grateful Minds!
Bid *Zaphna* plead for thee, and I may hear thee.
Till then thou art my Scorn.——May'ſt thou, like me,
Behold thy deareſt Blood ſpilt at thy Feet.
Mecca, *Medina*, all our *Aſian* World,
Join, join to drive th' Impoſtor from the Earth;
Bluſh at his Chains, and ſhake 'em off in Vengeance!
Theſe are th' Endearments, theſe the cordial Vows
Palmira's grateful Heart returns to *Mahomet*.

MAH.

MAH. [*Apart.*] Be ſtill, my Soul, nor let a Woman's Rage
Ruffle thy wonted Calm.——Spight of thy Hate,
Thou'rt lovely ſtill, and charming ev'n in Madneſs.
[*A Shout, and Noiſe of Fighting.*]

PAL. [*Apart.*] Roll, roll your Thunders, Heav'n, and aid the Storm!
Now hurl your Lightnings on the guilty Head,
And plead the Cauſe of injur'd Innocence!

MAH. My Fair, retire, nor let thy gentle Soul
Shake with Alarms; thou'rt my peculiar Care.
I go to quell this trait'rous Inſurrection,
And will attend thee ſtraight.

PAL. No Tyrant, no.
I'll join my Brother, help to head our Friends,
And urge 'em on —— [*Exit* Palmira.

Enter ALI.

MAH. Whence, *Ali*, that Surprize!

ALI. My Royal Chief,
The Foe prevails——Thy Troops, led on by *Mirvan*,
Are all cut off, and valiant *Mirvan*'s Self,
By *Zaphna* ſlain, lies welt'ring in his Blood.
The Guard that to our Arms ſhould ope the Gates,
Struck with the common Phrenzy, vow thy Ruin;
And Death, and Vengeance, is the general Cry.

MAH. Can *Ali* fear? Then *Mahomet* be thy Self.

ALI. See thy few Friends whom wild Deſpair hath arm'd,
(But arm'd in vain,) are come to die beſide thee.

MAH. Ye heartleſs Traitors! *Mahomet* alone
Shall be his own Defender, and your Guard,
Againſt the Crowds of *Mecca*.——Follow me.

Enter

Enter ZAPHNA, PALMIRA, *and* PHARON, *with Citizens, and the Body of* Alcanor *on a Bier.*

MAH. Hah!

ZAPH. See, my Friends, where the Impoſtor ſtands,
With Head erect, as if he knew not Guilt;
As if no Tongue ſpake from *Alcanor*'s Wound,
Nor call'd for Vengeance on him.

MAH. Impious Man!
Is't not enough to've ſpilt thy Parent-Blood?
But with atrocious and blaſpheming Lips,
Dar'ſt thou arraign the Subſtitute of Heav'n!

ZAPH. The Subſtitute of Heav'n! So is the Sword,
The Peſtilence, the Famine; ſuch art thou.
Such are the Bleſſings Heav'n haſt ſent to Man,
By thee its Delegate: Nay more to me.
O he took Pains, *Palmira*, upon us,
Religion'd us into ſuch monſtrous Crimes
As Nature ſicken'd at Conception of ——
How could'ſt thou damn us thus?

MAH. Babler, avaunt!

ZAPH. Well thou upbraid'ſt me, for to parley with thee
Half brands me Coward. O revenge me, Friends,
Revenge *Alcanor*'s Maſſacre: Revenge
Palmira's Wrongs, and cruſh the rancorous Monſter.

MAH. Hear me, ye Slaves, born to obey my Will.

PAL. Ah! hear him not; Fraud dwells upon his Tongue.

ZAPH. Have at thee, Fiend. —— Hah! Heav'n.

[Zaphna

[Zaphna *advancing, reels, and reclines on his Sword.*

What Cloud is this
That thwarts upon my Sight; my Head grows dizzy,
My Joints unloose, sure 'tis the Stroke of Fate.

MAH. [*Aside.*] The Poison works: —— Then triumph *Mahomet!*

ZAPH. Off, off base Lethargy.

PAL. Brother, dismay'd!
Hast thou no Power, but in a guilty Cause,
And only strength to be a Parricide?

ZAPH. Spare that Reproach——Come on——It will not be.

[*Hangs down his Sword, and reclines on* Pharon.

Some cruel Pow'r unnerves my willing Arm,
Blasts my Resolves, and weighs me down to Earth.

MAH. Such be the Fate of all who brave our Law.
Nature and Death have heard my Voice, and now
Let Heav'n be Judge 'twixt *Zaphna* and myself,
And instant blast the guilty of the Two.

PHA. *Zaphna* revive —— What means this gen'ral Terror?
They stand aghast, and tremble at his Voice!

PAL. Brother! O *Zaphna!*

ZAPH. *Zaphna* now no more.

[*Sinking down by* Alcanor's *Body, and leaning on the Bier,* Pharon *kneeling down with him, and supporting him.*

Down, down, good *Pharon*——Thou poor injur'd Corse,
May I embrace thee? Won't thy pallid Wound
Purple anew at the unnatural Touch,
And ooze fresh Calls for Vengeance?

PAL. O my Brother!

ZAPH. In vain's the guiltless Meaning of my Heart:
High Heav'n detests th' involuntary Crime,

And

And dooms for Parricide —— Then tremble, Tyrant.
If the Supreme can puniſh Error thus,
What new invented Tortures muſt await
Thy Soul, grown leprous with ſuch foul Offences,
As might make dim the very Eye of Day?
But ſoft —— Now Fate and Nature are at Strife.——
Siſter, farewel; with Tranſport ſhould I quit
This toilſome, perilous, deluſive Stage,
But that I leave thee on't; leave thee, *Palmira*,
Expos'd to what is worſe than Fear can Image,
That bad Man's Mercy. But I know thee brave,
Know that thou'lt act a Part——look on her Heav'n,
Guide her, and —— oh! [*Dies.*

PAL. Think not, ye Men of *Mecca*,
This Death inflicted by the Hand of Heav'n,
'Tis he —— That Viper. ——

MAH. Know, ye faithleſs Wretches,
'Tis mine to deal the Bolts of angry Heav'n:
Behold them there, and let the Wretch who doubts,
Tremble at *Zaphna*'s Fate, and know that *Mahomet*
Can read his Thoughts, and doom him with a Look.
Go then, and thank your Pontiff, and your Prince,
For each Day's Sun he grants you to behold.
Hence, to your Temples, and appeaſe my Rage.
[*The People go off.*

PAL. Ah! ſtay, my Brother's murder'd by this Tyrant,
By Poiſon, not by Piety, he kills.

MAH. 'Tis done—— Thus ever be our Law receiv'd!
[*Apart.*
Now fair *Palmira* ——

PAL. Monſter, is it thus
Thou mak'ſt thyſelf a God by added Crimes,
And Murder's juſtify'd by Sacrilege?

MAH.

MAH. Think, exquiſite *Palmira*, for thy Sake ——

PAL. Thou'ſt been the Murderer of all my Race.
See where *Alcanor*, ſee where *Zaphna* lies:
Do they not call for me too at thy Hands?
O that they did! —— But I can read thy Thoughts;
Palmira's ſav'd for ſomething worſe than Death,
That Modeſty denies her Tongue to utter.
This to prevent——*Zaphna*, I follow thee.
[*Stabs herſelf with* Zaphna's *Sword.*

MAH. Slaves, ſeize her deſp'rate Hand.

PAL. Thou ſtriv'ſt in vain,
[*Reclining on her Attendants, and then laying herſelf againſt the Side of the Bier, oppoſite to* Zaphna.
To hold a Soul reſolv'd.——O *Zaphna*, Brother,
We burnt not with ſo criminal Flame
As does that Tyrant.——When the Heart is pure,
Small is the Difference, eaſy is the Change,
A Lover's Paſſion for a Siſter's Fondneſs.

MAH. What haſt thou done?

PAL. A Deed of Glory, Tyrant!
Thou'ſt left no Object worth *Palmira*'s Eye;
And when I ſhut out Light, I ſhut out thee —— [*Dies.*

MAH. Farewel, dear Victim of my boundleſs Paſſion!
The Price of Treachery, the Reward of Murder,
Crown of my Hopes, and Fruit of all my Crimes,
Sink with thee to the Earth.——O Juſtice! Juſtice!
In vain are Glory, Worſhip and Dominion!
All-Conqueror as I am, I am a Slave,
And, by the World ador'd, dwell with the Damn'd.
My Crimes have planted Scorpions in my Breaſt ——
There is Remorſe! Is Conſcience then! O Furies!
Here, here I feel ye. 'Tis in vain to brave
The Hoſt of Terrors that invade my ſoul;

I might

I might deceive the World, myſelf I cannot.

ALI. Be calm awhile, my Lord, think what you are.

MAH. Hah! What I am! [*Turning to the Bodies.*]
Ye breathleſs Family!
Let your loud-crying Wounds ſay what I am.
O ſnatch me from that Sight; quick, quick tranſport me
To Nature's loneſieſt Manſion, where the Sun
Ne'er enter'd, where the Sound of Human Tread
Was never heard —— But wherefore? Still I there,
There ſtill ſhall find myſelf —— Ay, that's the Hell!
I'll none on't. —— [*Drawing his Sword.*

ALI. Heav'ns! help, hold him!

[Ali, &c. *diſarm him.*

MAH. Paltry Daſtards!
You fled the Foe, but can diſarm your Maſter.
Angel of Death, whoſe Pow'r I've long proclaim'd,
Now aid me, if thou can'ſt; now if thou can'ſt,
Draw the kind Curtain of eternal Night,
And ſhroud me from the Horrors that beſet me.
O what a Curſe is Life, when Self-Conviction
Flings our Offences hourly in our Face,
And turns Exiſtence Torturer to itſelf.

FINIS.

EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

LONG has the ſhameful Licence of the Age,
With ſenſeleſs Ribaldry, diſgrac'd the Stage;
So much Indecencies have been in Vogue,
They pleaded Cuſtom in an Epilogue;
As if the Force of Reaſon was a Yoke
So heavy —— they muſt eaſe it with a Joke;
Diſarm the Moral of its virtuous Sway,
Or elſe the Audience go diſpleas'd away.
How have I bluſh'd to ſee a Tragic Queen,
With ill-tim'd Mirth diſgrace the well-wrote Scene;
From all the ſad Solemnity of Woe,
Trip nimbly forth —— to ridicule a Beau;
Then, as the looſeſt Airs ſhe had been gleaning,
Cocquette the Fan, and leer a double Meaning.
Shame on thoſe Arts that proſtitute the Bays!
Shame on the Bard, who this way hopes for Praiſe!
The bold, but honeſt Author of To-night,
Diſdains to pleaſe you, if he pleaſe not right.
If in his well-meant Scene you chance to find
Aught to ennoble or enlarge the Mind;
If he has found the Means, with honeſt Art,
To fix the nobleſt Wiſhes in the Heart;
In ſofter Accents to inform the *Fair*,
How bright they look, when Virtue drops the Tear;
Enjoy with friendly Welcome the Repaſt,
And keep the Heart-felt Reliſh to the laſt.